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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIX, Issue No. 33 | SATURDAY FEBRUARY 7, 2009 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

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NMC completes first survey on program review process. PAGE 5

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

If the gubernatorial elections were held today, which of the five who have already expressed their intention to run will you vote for?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

130 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Iraqi Polls

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's allies swept to victory during last weekend's provincial elections in Iraq.

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Miley Storm

Miley Cyrus is responding to criticism that she mocked Asians in a photograph of the tween star stretching the corners of her eyes.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 20

Delay federalization—House

Lower chamber backs Kilili's, Fitial's call to postpone June 1 date

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives has passed a resolution requesting the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to delay the application of U.S. immigration law in the CNMI.

The resolution supports Delegate Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan's push to delay it by 180 days, the maximum amount allowed under the law. Public Law 110-229 is

See DELAY on Page 4

"I think it is necessary that we have more time to be prepared for this implementation based on whatever language comes out of the regulations."

—Rep. Diego Benavente

IN FEDERALIZATION LAWSUIT

US govt files new motion to dismiss; oral arguments set

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Lawyers for the U.S. government have filed a new motion to dismiss the federalization lawsuit after their first motion exceeded 25 pages — the maximum number of pages allowed.

Last month, the U.S. government filed a motion that was 33 pages. In response, lawyers for the CNMI asked the Washington, D.C. District

See US on Page 4

US Navy removes 80,000 lbs of underwater obstructions

Project allows more ships to enter Saipan for R&R

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Over 40 tons or 80,000 lbs of corals and rock formations were removed from the Saipan channel and Tanapag harbor by the U.S. Navy, allowing for the safer navigation of military ships making port visits to the island.

This is the biggest U.S. Navy project of its kind so far on Saipan.

Fifteen U.S. Navy divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit One Company 1-8 (MDSU-1 CO 1-8), along with personnel from the USNS *Safeguard*, removed 25 "dangers to navigation" from Jan. 6 to 28.

See NAVY on Page 4

Master diver Jon Klukas, right, joins 11 of the 15 U.S. Navy divers who are part of the harbor clearance operations team that removed over 80,000 lbs of dangers to navigation from the Saipan channel and Tanapag harbor, along with the crew of the USNS *Safeguard*.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Local

College offers payment plans for future NMI nurses

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

A payment plan for the Commonwealth's potential nurses is now being offered by Emmanuel College to assist families in the community who are struggling to provide education to their children amidst the financial hard times.

Emmanuel College president Mark Mendiola disclosed this yesterday to *Saipan Tribune*, adding that the institution is also considering some financial assistance for its current students.

The college is the island's first vocational nursing school offering an 11-month course at the Pacific Tower in Chalan Kanoa.

Only on its second year, the institution had conferred certificates to 20 graduates last November, majority of whom are already preparing for their national licensure examination.

Mendiola said their second batch of nurses is composed of five students from Tinian and the rest are from Saipan.

"We're working on our third batch. In understanding the economic challenge at present, Emmanuel College is doing its best to accommodate some students who may need financial assistance. We're considering to offer some payment plans to assist students who may want to look at our program," he said.

Mendiola disclosed that the college is in the process of communicating with national nursing accreditation agencies where the institution will soon file its candidacy.

"We're excited now that we're seeking our accreditation status to be recognized nationally and we're in the process of doing that. We know it's a long process but Emmanuel College is committed in completing it … hopefully we can expand and grow from there," he said yesterday.

Mendiola reiterated that Emmanuel College's vocational nursing program intends to assist and supplement the good work at NMC.

"We're complementing the NMC program. Our program is very focused and it doesn't have other general educational requirements," Mendiola said, adding that Emmanuel College offers advance level of nursing skills that would help students when they expand the program to NMC's two-year course.

Citing the high demand for nurses here and abroad, Mendiola said there's a need for greater support from the community and government.

"The nursing position is in high demand…and [the] CNMI is in dire need of nurses. There's a need for community and government support to this industry," he said.

Emmanuel College, which opened its doors last year for its 11-month vocational nursing course, was lauded for its commitment to provide a quality vocational nursing program for the Commonwealth. With the collapse of the garment industry, the CNMI has found education as a new industry to supplement the tourism market, noting the establishment of Ladera International School and the Loyola Medical and Business School.

Supplier sues Plumeria for allegedly refusing to pay for gas

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A fuel supplier has sued the management company and owners or agents of Plumeria Resort in Achugao for allegedly refusing to pay $28,064 worth of diesel fuel delivery.

AA Enterprises Inc. sued Noah Saipan Inc. and 10 unnamed owners or agents of Plumeria Resort for breach of contract.

AA Enterprises, through lawyer Robert T. Torres, asked the Superior Court to order the defendants to pay the sum plus accrued interest, court costs, and attorney's fees.

Torres stated in the complaint that Noah Saipan Inc. was retained by the Saipan Achugao Resort Member Association, SARMA, to manage the Plumeria Resort.

Torres said Noah was fully authorized to contract on behalf of Plumeria Resort and SARMA for supplies and fuel.

The lawyer said the defendants, as purchaser itself and or the manager for the resort, ordered diesel fuel from AA Enterprises.

Torres said the defendants agreed to pay for the fuel and interest at the rate of 1 percent per month on all accounts remaining unpaid after 30 days from the date of the invoice.

He said that last Oct. 27, AA forwarded to Noah or Sarma a statement of its account reflecting the outstanding balance and the documentation upon which the charges were based.

"After examination, Noah Saipan and SARMA acknowledged the charges and expressed its intention or desire to pay them," Torres said.

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Shoda's lawsuit vs Fund in court for 9 yrs now

Wiseman wants immediate resolution

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Former Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Carlos A. Shoda's lawsuit against the NMI Retirement Fund has been pending in the Superior Court for almost nine years now.

Shoda's case is still very much alive and associate judge David A. Wiseman, who is now handling the case, wants an immediate resolution.

Wiseman on Thursday denied the NMI Fund board of trustees' motion to dismiss Shoda's third amended complaint/petition for judicial review.

The judge said that, as clearly stated in the Superior Court's order on Jan. 18, 2008, Shoda has a valid claim that he was denied due process in the unilateral reduction of his retirement fund benefits as well as a failure to test the sufficiency of the evidence included in the Office of the Public Auditor's audit report.

Wiseman said he will file a procedural timeline in the case.

"As the parties are aware, this matter has been pending for approximately nine years," he said. "It is the expectation of this court that this matter move promptly forward toward resolution."

Shoda was the CPA executive director at various times between 1976 to 1989 and from 1994 to 1997.

At the time Shoda retired, he was approved for retirement benefits by the Fund based on a calculation of total credited service of 33 years, nine months, and 21 days, which would entitle him to a monthly pension of $5,761.64, paid semi-monthly.

At the time he retired, CPA allowed Shoda accrual of overtime and compensatory time to be calculated into the determination of his retirement benefits. His retirement benefits were paid at this higher rate until 1998.

In 1998, the Fund received a notice from an independent investigation that CPA had improperly calculated retirement benefits for former employees such as including overtime and compensatory time for employees who were employed via excepted service contracts.

The Fund informed Shoda that they would be reducing his retirement benefits in April 2000 by deducting the allegedly improperly granted compensatory time and overtime.

According to their calculations, Shoda had been overpaid in excess of $20,000. The Fund subsequently reduced his payments.

Shoda appealed, then filed a lawsuit.

On Jan. 16, 2008, then associate judge Juan T. Lizama granted the Fund's motion to dismiss the lawsuit, saying the Fund could only be sued through its trustees.

Lizama allowed Shoda to amend his complaint to name the correct defendant in the case.

Last August, Shoda amended the complaint to substitute the proper defendant as Lizama dictated.

The board opposed the motion. Wiseman heard the case on Wednesday.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Pursuant to 4 CMC, Div. 7, Section 7306 (i) of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Oceania Insurance Corporation is making its intention known of increasing the company's paid-up capital and surplus in accordance with this statute.

LAURIE STURGES
Manager
Oceania Insurance Corporation
1st Flr. Chong's Bldg.
Pale Arnold Rd., Gualo Rai
PMB 557 Box 10000
Saipan, MP 96950

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

GMJ's Corporation

The public is invited to provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on Conditional Use Permit Application, No. 2009-0380, by GMJ's Corporation. The application is for warehousing of general merchandise on Airport Road.

Date: February 13, 2009 (Friday)
Time: 6:00 pm
Place: Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan.

The conditional use application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments may also be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office no later than 4:30 pm, February 16, 2009. Written comments may be submitted via e-mail to staff@zoning.gov.mp, via US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950, or delivered to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please contact Steve Tilley, Zoning Administrator, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Division 3 of Title 10 CMC).

Crackdown nets alleged 7-year overstayer

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Division of Immigration's crackdown against suspected illegal aliens has resulted in the arrest Tuesday night of an alleged seven-year overstayer.

Chenghaun Xu, Chinese, was brought to the Superior Court yesterday afternoon for a bail hearing after Immigration filed a deportation case against him.

Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona set a $1,000 cash bail for Xu's temporary liberty.

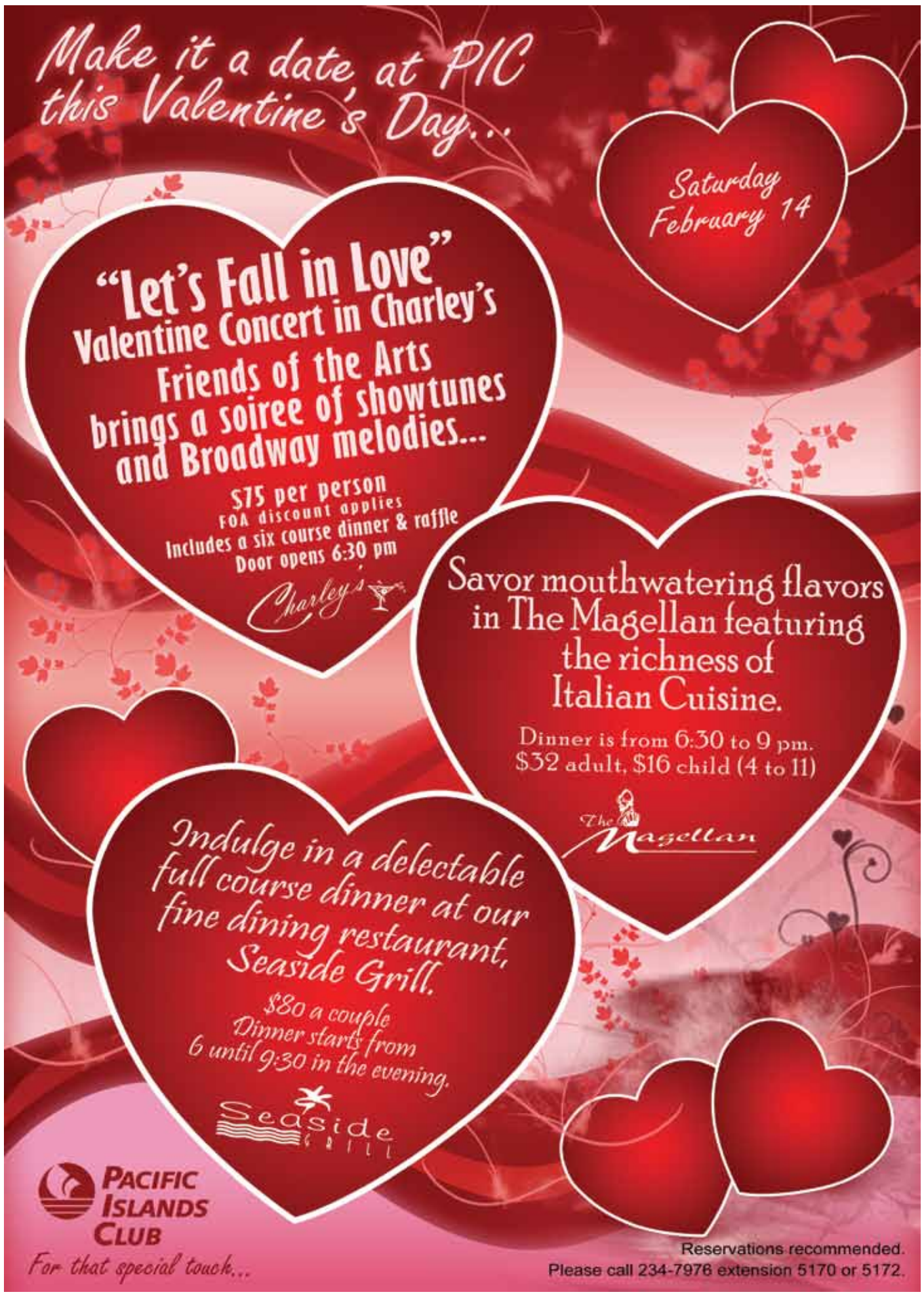
Manglona ordered the respondent to appear in court on March 19 at 2pm to explain why he should not be deported from the Commonwealth.

After listening to the testimony of Immigration investigator Nick Reyes, the judge found probable cause for the warrantless arrest of Xu.

According to Reyes, while they were conducting "compliance monitoring" operation against suspected illegal aliens in western Garapan, they spotted a woman entering a vehicle believed to be operating as an illegal taxicab.

Reyes said they stopped the vehicle and found out that Xu has no work permit. He later discovered that the respondent's work permit expired in March 2002.

The investigator told *Saipan Tribune* that Xu was not held for operating an illegal taxi because they had no sufficient evidence.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Please call 234-7976 extension 5170 or 5172.

Tan Holdings holds walkathon to honor JP, raise funds for MMAC

Tan Holdings Corp. is launching today its annual three-mile walk and fundraiser. The event is being held in honor of and dedicated to the memory of former corporation executive John "JP" Pangelinan. The walk also aims to raise funds for the Marianas March Against Cancer.

For the $5 donation, an adult participant will receive a shirt and will be entitled to refreshments at the end of the walk by the Susupe Beach Park.

The walk will start at 7am and the registration for the event will begin at 6am by the Beach Road Pavilion in front of the JP Center (formerly CIC Center). Corresponding shirt and food stubs will be handed out by JP Walk Coordinators.

Participants are requested to consider parking their vehicles by the Fishing Base area in front of Kristo Rai Church. JP Center parking will be reserved for non-Tan Holdings' participants. Shuttle service from the Susupe Beach Park to the JP Center, Garapan Fishing Base and Fiesta Resort & Spa areas will be available at the end of the walk.

"Everyone is encouraged to bring their family and loved ones to this meaningful activity. Your contribution will support a very good cause. We look forward to walking with all of you. Stay healthy and be well!" said the JP Walk organizers. ***(PR)***

EMO lifts high surf advisory

The Emergency Management Office has canceled the high surf advisory after it learned that surf on north facing reefs have fallen below hazardous levels.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, the islands should expect moderate to fresh trade winds and isolated trade wind showers the next few days.

This will result in combined seas gradually diminishing from near 9 feet to 7 feet on Saturday.

Today, east winds will be 15 KT and wind waves 4-6 feet. North swells will be 5 feet and east swells 6 feet. Tonight, northeast wind will be 15 KT wind with waves 3-5 feet. North swell will be 4 feet and east will be 5 feet. ***(EMO)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

ACT membership meeting set

The Association of Commonwealth Teachers will hold a general membership meeting on Monday, Feb. 9, 2009, at 6pm, at the San Vicente Elementary School cafeteria. Agenda includes the election of new officers and promotional offer for double stamps available to teachers through Shell Marianas.

Meeting of the Autism Society

The Autism Society of the CNMI will be holding its monthly meeting on Feb. 12, 2009, at 5:30pm at the NMPASI Conference Room. Information regarding the group and future meetings will be available at this meeting. All families and friends of individuals with autism and autism related spectrum disorders are invited to attend. For additional information, call John at 234-8803/4 or Larrisa at 322-3761 or send an email to as_cnmi@yahoo.com. ***(PR)***

UPAA CNMI meeting tomorrow

The University of the Philippines Alumni Association-CNMI Chapter will have a meeting tomorrow, Feb. 8, 10am at the Filipino Workers Resource Center, first floor, Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe. All UPAA officers/members and UP alumni are invited to attend. ***(PR)***

DEQ brigade COP cleanup

The Division of Environmental Quality cleanup brigade will be picking up trash at Coral Ocean Point (Unai Dangkulo) today, Feb. 7.

Those who would like to volunteer may join the group at 8am. Volunteers will clean until 10am and break for drinks and then continue, if needed.

NAVY

From Page 1

Jon Klukas, a master diver at the U.S. Navy's MDSU-1 CO 1-8, said the ultimate goal is to enable military ships that have a deep draft to enter the Saipan channel without damaging the ship.

"What spurred this whole operation is the USS *Chancellorsville*, which actually hit one of these underwater obstacles several years ago and it did a considerable amount of damage to the sonar dome on that ship. That's a very expensive repair," Klukas told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview aboard the USNS *Safeguard* yesterday.

Klukas said the project also allows Navy cruisers and destroyers to make port visits on Saipan for rest and recreation, which will help boost economic activities on the island.

Jim Arenovski, president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, yesterday said the more military ships calling on Saipan, the better for the economy.

"They've done a good job in removing obstructions from the channel to allow us to get more military ships here for R&R [rest and recreation], and that will help the economy," he said.

Capt. Ed Dickerson, a U.S. merchant marine with the Military Sealift Command, also said the USNS *Safeguard* was able to get a lot of work done on Saipan, including repairs and re-supply.

"Saipan has been a good place for re-supply of various items, from gaskets to copy paper," he said, adding that the ship had at least $51,000 in purchases for re-supply.

Excellent liberty venue

Vice Admiral John M. Bird, commander of the U.S. Seventh Fleet, said in a letter to the USNS Safeguard: "Your success is a significant step forward in enabling DDG and CG class ships to moor pierside in a crucial port and excellent liberty venue."

Bird said with an operation this complex, there were several instances where personnel could have been severely injured.

"The fact that this mission was completed without incident is a testament to the professionalism of everyone involved," said Bird.

According to Dickerson, CNMI Gov. Benigno R. Fitial wrote to Rear Admiral William D. French, commander of the U.S. Naval Forces Marianas, for assistance in clearing the commercial channel for safer navigation.

Dickerson said French discussed the request with Rear Admiral Nora W. Tyson, and it later got the approval of Admiral Bird.

The Seventh Fleet tasked MDSU-1 Company 1-8 and the USNS *Safeguard* to "locate, remove and dispose of in deep water" the dangers to navigation located within Tanapag harbor and Saipan channel.

Saipan Chamber of Commerce's Arenovski looks forward to having more ships on the island now that the Saipan channel and Tanapag harbor are clear of obstructions.

"The project shows how important Saipan is as a liberty port. That makes us feel good. It will help the economy," he said.

Future projects

Klukas said they also surveyed other areas for future projects on Saipan.

"There are little things in the harbor or outside the channel that we'll take a look at, evaluating and removing those from the harbor," he said.

Dickerson and Klukas said the Navy personnel enjoy their stay on Saipan, since the USNS arrived here on Dec. 22. The ship leaves Tuesday.

"We had a fantastic time here. Everybody has been very gracious. Our goal is to be able to come here more and have other U.S. ships come here more because Saipan does offer too much to us—the beauty, the history," said Klukas.

This is Klukas' first visit to the CNMI in 15 years. He said he was here 15 years ago for an assignment on Tinian.

The harbor clearance operations team consisted of the combined crew of the USNS *Safeguard* (26 personnel) and the 15 divers with the MDSU-1 Company 1-8 out of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Besides Klukas, the other divers are Randy Duncan, Paul Wotus, Kenny Bontempo, Enrique Martino, Nicholas Zaborski, Jericho Diego, Richard Racette, AJ Grun, Mariano Lorde, Richard Ellis, PJ Odell, Jason Balavram, Brody Dorton and Matt Stinson.

On Monday, the team will brief the Commonwealth Ports Authority about their harbor clearance operations.

US

From Page 1

Court to dismiss the motion.

But both parties recently came to an agreement that the federal government could file a new, shortened motion.

The condensed document covers the same issues the previous motion included: that the CNMI is changing its argument from one of economic harm to a breach of self-governance; the CNMI's attorney general did not sign off on the lawsuit; and that the federal government is well within its right to impose U.S. immigration law on the CNMI.

The federal government has also filed a motion to deny the CNMI Descent for Self-Government and Indigenous Rights group from joining the CNMI government in the lawsuit because, according to lawyers for the U.S. government, the group's arguments are merely expansions or reiterations of the CNMI's arguments

"They are the same arguments said differently, and they do not reflect a difference in interests from those of the CNMI," the lawyers wrote. "The CNMI is represented by experienced, competent counsel who have submitted more than 100 pages of argument on behalf of the CNMI, covering all the issues raised in the motions. The motion to allow CNMI Descent should be denied."

The group, in their motion, said the CNMI Descent's perspective is different than the Commonwealth as a whole because the group is looking at the impact on the indigenous population.

The indigenous population, according to the motion, will be diluted under the law because foreign workers in the CNMI will for the first time be eligible for permanent residency.

Until now, lawyers for the group wrote, the non-indigenous population grew by three methods: migration of U.S. citizens to the CNMI; the naturalization of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens; and the birth of new citizens in the CNMI.

These three ways were agreed upon in the Covenant, the motion stated.

"These increases, moreover, have been sufficiently incremental that the CNMI has been able to evolve gradually and organically toward a multi-ethnic political community with a minimum of social and cultural disruption," the lawyers wrote. "The new method of increasing the citizen population, by contrast, will be drastic and disruptive; it was never agreed to by the indigenous community; and it is prejudicial to their legitimate interests."

Robert O'Connor, the lawyer representing the group, earlier said the federalization law is disastrous to the CNMI economy and takes away the right to self-government.

"The decision on that law was made by senators from Delaware [and] by congressmen from Idaho, none of whom we elect, none of whom give a damn about what any people here think," the lawyer said.

Meanwhile, United States District Court Judge Paul L. Friedman has set March 12 as the date when lawyers for the CNMI and the U.S. will argue their cases.

DELAY

From Page 1

scheduled to go into effect June 1.

With the start date four months away, there are still many uncertainties that need to be worked out, said Rep. Diego Benavente, who introduced the measure.

"I think it is necessary that we have more time to be prepared for this implementation based on whatever language comes out of the regulations," he said.

Some of the regulations relating to the law have been promulgated, such as the joint Guam-CNMI visa waiver program, but many are still being drafted. China and Russia were left out of the visa waiver program that was announced last month and is still in the comment period. Government officials, tourism and business leaders are concerned about the impact the loss of the two markets will have on the CNMI economy.

A delay would allow tourists from those countries an additional six months to enter the CNMI without a visa.

"Bringing in six more months of this market is critical for our economy, so that's another important reason," Benavente said. "And again, it allows us some continued relief of this scare that we are going to lose the China and Russia markets."

The CNMI's pending lawsuit against the U.S. government that seeks to block federal takeover needs to be resolved as well, the representative said.

"We're hoping that it will be resolved soon, so that we can then officially go in and communicate directly with Homeland Security in drafting the regulations," he added.

Rep. Tina Sablan, who supported the passage of Public Law 110-229, said she supports a delay because unforeseen problems are arising. For example, it was recently disclosed that nonresident workers, foreign investors, and foreign retirees could face losing their status if they are out of the CNMI on June 1.

Despite an earlier comment Department of Public Lands Secretary John DelRosario made to the Legislature that DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano is considering delaying the implementation of the law until the lawsuit is resolved, Homeland Security said no such decision has been made.

"The Secretary, in consultation with other executive departments and the Governor of the CNMI may delay the start of the transition period for up to 180 days. No determination has yet been made by the Secretary regarding whether to delay the transition period effective date," DHS said in a statement to the *Saipan Tribune*.

The U.S. Congress must be notified by May 2 of any decision to push back the start date, DHS added.

Local government officials are also stepping up efforts to gain support from others in Congress.

House Speaker Arnold Palacios, Senate President Pete Reyes and Gov. Benigno Fitial are expected to sign a joint letter to Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo seeking her support for a delay. Bordallo is the chairwoman of the House Natural Resource's subcommittee on Insular Affairs.

Senate President Reyes said another personal concern of his is the separate minimum wage law. Over the next six years, minimum wage in the CNMI will rise by 50 cents each year until it reaches the federal level of $7.25 an hour.

"Right now…something the U.S. Congress doesn't see, even at minimum wage prior to the federal law, nonresident workers were being hired at the CNMI minimum wage, but when you factor in all the benefits it rises up to match or exceed the federal minimum wage law," Reyes said, adding that with the federal minimum wage, nonresident workers will not be entitled to the same benefits like housing, allowance, or transportation.

TO DETERMINE FACULTY'S EFFECTIVENESS

NMC completes first survey on program review process

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College has completed a survey that determines the effectiveness of its program review process among faculty and personnel, which in turn was submitted to the accrediting commission in its supplemental report.

Based on the findings, 88.8 percent agreed that the purpose of program review at NMC was widely communicated and clearly understood; 86.1 percent acknowledged that the review has introduced a systematic way of using data and evidence to inform decision-making; 62.5 percent say they are familiar with the use of "Nichols and Nichols Five-Column Model" in assessing the programs; while 72.1 percent strongly agree that they know the difference between "Forms 1 and 2."

The five-column model and the forms were used in reporting student learning outcomes and administrative unit outcomes for academic year 2007-2008, which was successfully completed by Fall 2008.

Saipan Tribune learned that 68.4 percent of the total respondents admitted their active participation in the first-cycle of the program review; 68.3 percent believe that the individuals in the program shared responsibilities for completing the program review documents; while 70.8 percent say there is adequate institutional support for participating in program review.

Meantime, an overwhelming majority of 89.9 percent correctly identified the Program Review Outcomes and Assessment Committee, PROAC, as the primary advisory standing committee of college council responsible for monitoring planning and program review, while 80.8 percent agreed that the budget and finance committee is the primary advisory shared governance body responsible for resource allocation.

The survey was participated by 81 respondents, majority of which are full-time faculty in all instructional sites.

According to Will Castro, director of office of institutional effectiveness, the survey was conducted in a general assembly last Jan. 6. A final report was completed and submitted to the management last Monday, Feb. 3.

The survey covered demographic information, knowledge of assessment and program review purpose and process, participation, shared governance, and overall assessment of the first cycle of the program review.

Castro is the incoming chair for the second cycle of the survey, which will be determined by the college's management at a later date.

NMC established the PROAC and adopted the student learning outcomes comprehensive implementation program in partial fulfillment of the board of regent policy.

The result of the survey, Castro said, was recommended for use by PROAC, the group that monitors and determines the effectiveness of the methodology being used in the institution's assessment of the programs.

"This is a clear indication that everyone knows what and why we're doing the program review process and assessment," he told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, adding that they are elated over the overwhelming result of the first study.

Castro disclosed that WASC initially conveyed the message that it was impressed with the review process because it covered nearly all the programs offered at the institution.

"What's important to WASC is that we as a college is attempting to determine if what we're doing is effective …in meeting students need," he added.

Based on the study's findings, there were three things that worked well in the first cycle: the use of the five-column model, greater cooperation and communication, and the support and feedback from PROAC.

There were also three most cited recommendations in the study. These include greater participation of additional membership to the PROAC, more programs to evaluate, and establish clear and strict protocols on internal and external communications regarding program review.

"We're considering all these recommendations in our second cycle which will begin soon," he said, adding that first meeting of his committee is scheduled for next week.

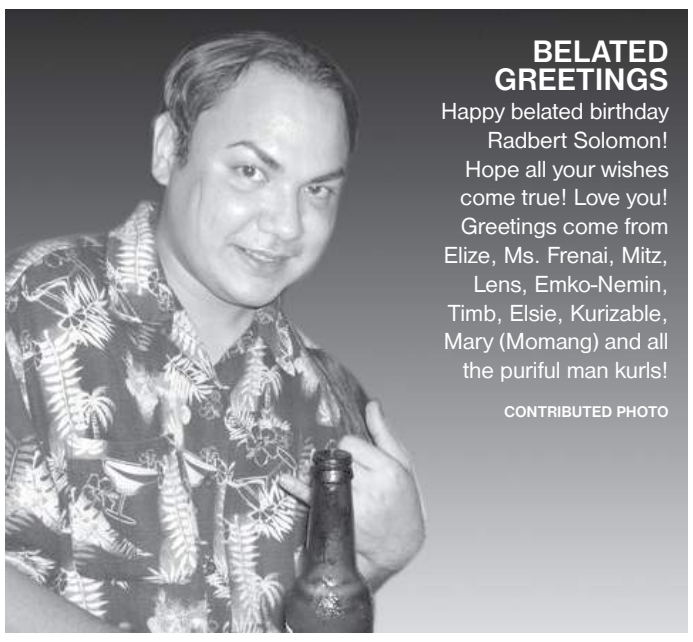
"We're targeting to complete the second cycle within this year," he said.

Castro said, through the management recommendation, program assessment review can be conducted as soon as practical at the institution.

HAPPY CHRISTENING

"A child is a precious gift from God and Baptism is God's gift wrapping." Happy Christening to our princess, Jealexiz Z. Torres. Love, Daddy Jay, Mommy Claire, and Nina Jovan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



BELATED GREETINGS

Happy belated birthday Radbert Solomon! Hope all your wishes come true! Love you! Greetings come from Elize, Ms. Frenai, Mitz, Lens, Emko-Nemin, Timb, Elsie, Kurizable, Mary (Momang) and all the puriful man kurls!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Man pleads guilty to giving his passport to a deportee

A man accused of letting a deportee use his passport has pleaded guilty in federal court to the charge of misuse of a passport.

Minghao Yin, 27, signed a plea agreement with the U.S. government and entered a guilty plea.

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David A. Wiseman accepted Yin's plea and set the sentencing for April 7 at 9am.

Wiseman allowed Yin's temporary release on his own recognizance.

The U.S. government on Tuesday filed an information that charged the defendant with one count of misuse of a passport.

The Assistant U.S. Attorney's Office stated that on Aug. 16, 2008, the defendant delivered his passport to Jiang Zhejun for the latter's use.

That same day, local authorities escorted Zhejun to Saipan International Airport for his scheduled deportation.

Zhejun posed as Yin using Yin's passport. After checking in at the airport and evading his escort, Zhejun met Yin at or near the airport.

Zhejun then gave back to Yin his passport. Yin then attempted to leave Saipan on the same flight Zhejun was to board. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
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Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhc.gov.mp

NOTICE OF SALE
UNDER POWER OF SALE
IN DEED OF TRUST

VANESSA C. IGINOEF/ VALERIO MENDIOLA CABRERA AND MARIANA ALDAN CABRERA (collectively "Trustor"), on or about June 21, 1985, gave and delivered to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation ("Trustee"), acting on behalf of the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Office ("USDA"), formerly known as Farmers Home Administration, United States of America ("FmHA"), a Deed of Trust upon certain real property hereinafter described, which Deed of Trust was recorded on June 26, 1985, under Document No. 85-1210 to secure payment of a Promissory Note of the Trustor to the Trustee, acting on behalf of the USDA, Rural Development Office.

The Deed of Trust and this Notice of Sale affect the property hereafter described:

LOT NO. 011 H 16, CONTAINING AN AREA OF 621 SQUARE METERS, MORE OR LESS, AS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED ON DRAWING/CADASTRAL PLAT NUMBER 011 H 00, THE ORIGINAL OF WHICH WAS REGISTERED WITH THE LAND REGISTRY AS DOCUMENT NUMBER 702, ON THE 1ST DAY OF MARCH, 1971.

The Trustor has defaulted on payment of the Note secured by the Deed of Trust, and by reason of said default, Trustee issued its Notice of Default and served to Trustor on November 24, 2008. More than thirty (30) days have passed since the default notice was served on Trustor and said default has not been cured.

Pursuant to 2 CMC § 4622(b)(2), NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Trustee will, on February 13, 2009, at 10:00 a.m., at the office of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, Garapan, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, under power of sale contained in the Deed of Trust, sell the above described parcel of real property at public auction to the highest qualified bidder, to satisfy the obligations secured by said Deed of Trust. The minimum bid offer shall be not less than **$56,150.00**. Sealed bids will be opened at the auction and those present will be given the opportunity to submit an additional bid, thereby, outbidding the highest sealed bid amount received by NMHC and opened on the date of the auction.

Sealed bids must be addressed to Ms. Merced M. Tomokane, Acting Chairwoman of the Board, Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 and must also be received no later than **February 12, 2009, at 4:00 p.m. All bids received from outside the Commonwealth must be received no later than February 12, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. Untimely sealed bids will be rejected.**

The sale shall be without warranty as to the title or interest to be conveyed or as to the property under the Deed of Trust, other than that the Trustee is the lawful holder of such Deed of Trust. The purchase price shall be payable by cash, certified check or cashier's check to NMHC and shall be paid within 72 hours from time of sale.

Trustee reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to cancel or extend the date, time and place for sale of such property. Any prospective buyer must be a person authorized by the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to hold title to real property in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Dated this 12th day of January, 2009.

/s/ JOSHUA T. SASAMOTO
Corporate Director

NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency

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2009 Tour

APRIL 4-20, 2009

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Twin sharing/per person

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XIX, Issue No. 033

Published daily at 2/F CIC Centre,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

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MEMBER
The Associated Press Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Zimbabwe's false hope

South Africa has won a round in its relentless campaign to preserve Robert Mugabe's hold over a dying Zimbabwe. With the help of its allies in the Southern Africa Development Community, South Africa succeeded last week in coercing opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai—the winner of last year's presidential election—into accepting a subordinate role in a "unity" government led by the 84-year-old strongman. The deal, which Mr. Tsvangirai bravely resisted for months, will leave Mr. Mugabe in charge of the country's last functioning institutions—army and police forces that have been waging a campaign of murder, rape and torture against the opposition and human rights activists.

Mr. Tsvangirai relented because he believed that the frightful humanitarian emergency in Zimbabwe left him with little choice. The United Nations estimates that 7 million of the 9 million people remaining in the country need food aid this month. A cholera epidemic has so far infected more than 62,000 and killed 3,100. Schools, hospitals and most businesses have closed, the national currency has been discarded and unemployment is over 90 percent.

The opposition will be placed in charge of the finance, health and education ministries, which it hopes will allow it to solicit and distribute aid to prevent mass death from starvation and disease. As South Africa and its client more cynically calculate, Mr. Tsvangirai's appointment will compel the United States, Britain and other Western governments to lift sanctions and renew economic support, thus preventing what would otherwise be the inevitable collapse of Mr. Mugabe's regime.

The misery of Zimbabwe is indeed compelling—but the Obama administration and other Western governments should reject South Africa's demands. It long ago became clear that Zimbabwe cannot recover as long as Mr. Mugabe remains in power. South Africa and other neighbors who insist on supporting the criminal regime are free to supply aid. But Western governments must maintain their sanctions—especially those aimed at individual members of the Mugabe regime and the companies they control.

A State Department statement this week said the administration would consider new assistance and the lifting of sanctions "when we have seen evidence of true power sharing as well as inclusive and effective governance." What should that include? Mr. Tsvangirai himself is demanding the freeing of more than 30 opposition activists from prison. Legislation must be passed giving the opposition a measure of control over security forces, and replacing the central bank president—a Mugabe crony—with a technocrat. Restrictions on the press must be lifted and foreign journalists admitted. Perhaps most important, the government must agree on a plan for a new presidential election, with guarantees for fairness and full international monitoring.

If these steps were taken, Western aid to Zimbabwe might serve some purpose. But they won't be. "Zimbabwe is mine" is Mr. Mugabe's only principle. The first step in any rescue must be prying the country from his grip.

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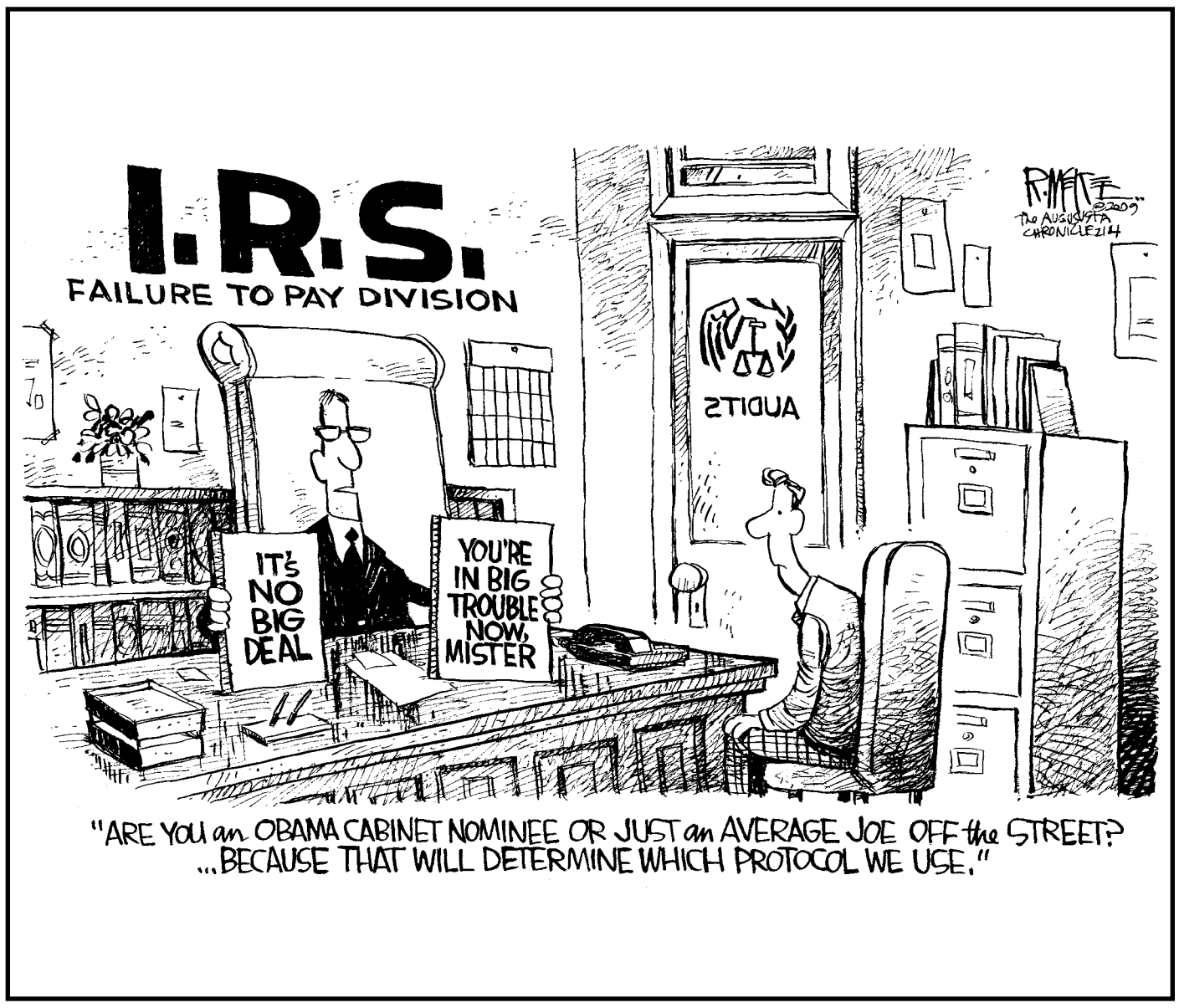

I.R.S.
FAILURE TO PAY DIVISION
AUDITS
IT'S NO BIG DEAL
YOU'RE IN BIG TROUBLE NOW, MISTER
"ARE YOU an OBAMA CABINET NOMINEE OR JUST an AVERAGE JOE OFF the STREET?
...BECAUSE THAT WILL DETERMINE WHICH PROTOCOL WE USE."

I'd like my CEO well-done, thanks

By PATT MORRISON
Los Angeles Times

Morrison is a Los Angeles Times columnist and host of a daily public-affairs show on Los Angeles public radio. Morrison's e-mail address is patt.morrison@latimes.com.

Oh, I want it. I want it bad.

Next week, when Barney Frank starts hauling fat-cat CEOs before his House Financial Services Committee, I want him wearing a barbecue apron. Instead of a gavel, I want him wielding a barbecue fork the size of a trident. By the time the grilling's over, I want . . . I want a lot.

I want groveling. I want show-trial sweating and stammering. I want their nine-figure bonus checks endorsed over to the rest of us. I want my 401(k) money back. I want blood; I'm a vegetarian, but I'd make an exception for a smoking plate of CEO en brochette.

Political scientists call this a "public mood" moment, when a focal incident like the Olympics or 9/11 fuses a nation of hundreds of millions of identities into one public identity.

University of California, Los Angeles political scientist Lynn Vavreck tells me that, in this case, the public mood is outrage on the part of good citizens—that's us—over the misdeeds of bad citizens.

It's embarrassing to think that we share a country with these rich dimwits. As Frank told the bankers: "People really hate you. ... You have to help us deal with that. You have to avoid being stupid."

I don't begin to understand the complicated financial stratagems these men engineered. Even the SEC couldn't keep up.

But we all understand perfectly the flagrant arrogance of Citigroup planning to spend $50 million on a new corporate jet—and a French-made jet, to boot—after taking billions in bailout money from taxpayers who are getting pink-slipped. Citigroup backed away from the plane; now, can it still be serious about spending $400 million for naming rights for the New York Mets' field? Mets fans—resist!

Collateralized debt obligations are beyond me, but I get the dunderheadedness of Wells Fargo booking a 12-night corporate bash in Vegas. The smartest person at Wells Fargo was the one who realized that a big party was itself a moral hazard and canceled the shindig.

People everywhere are fuming about their dismal fiscal futures at the hands of unregulated markets and companies run by chief executive officers who even now seem to be shining their shoes with hundred-dollar bills. President Obama used the word "shameful." Nice try, but words will never hurt them. Federal regulators are looking into Angelo R. Mozilo, the genius who made and unmade Countrywide Financial with its time-bomb subprime mortgages. But in the meantime, I'm thinking of giving myself the pleasure of TP-ing Mozilo's house. Single-ply—I can't afford the good stuff anymore.

In 1991, Charles H. Keating Jr. was on trial in Los Angeles. His freewheeling savings and loan conned thousands of elderly depositors into investing in risky bonds. They lost millions. A few ruined investors committed suicide.

Outside the courtroom, one elderly woman grabbed Keating by his lapels and screamed at him to give her her money back; some Arizona politicians set aside a whole month in her honor.

This time, the CEOs will probably never see the inside of a courtroom. What they've been up to with the bailout money only breaks the spirit of the law.

Psychologically, perp walks and prison time aren't necessary, says UCLA's Vavreck. Our anger "has a value in itself—being part of the community of people who hold this attitude is in itself some kind of benefit." In other words, forget it Jake, it's just catharsis.

I do feel consoled that Obama wants to cap the income of bank-bailout CEOs at half a million dollars. At the end of last year, as taxpayer money was being trundled to banks by the wheelbarrow-full, some CEOs turned down their annual bonuses. But they dealt out $18.4-billion worth to staff further down the food chain who, fail or prosper, had come to regard bonuses not as, well, bonuses but as a birthright.

What else can we get out of this?

I like the idea of a Fair Fair, a carnival roaming the country, bringing big-name, big-headed CEOs to a fairgrounds near you. For $10, you get three baseball throws, three chances to dunk the CEO into a big, cold, wet tank. For $5, you get a foam bat and a swat at CEOs running a gantlet of the newly poor. Half-price tickets for the unemployed.

No, wait. Let's put the CEOs in charge of that new "bad bank" being proposed to corral toxic assets. If they're as talented as they tell us they are, they can prove it by turning all that junk around.

No paychecks, let alone bonuses, until they do.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Partisan gridlock must not stop a stimulus

By BARACK OBAMA
Special to The Washington Post

The writer is president of the United States.

WASHINGTON—By now, it's clear to everyone that we have inherited an economic crisis as deep and dire as any since the days of the Great Depression. Millions of jobs that Americans relied on just a year ago are gone; millions more of the nest eggs they worked so hard to build have vanished. People everywhere are worried about what tomorrow will bring.

What Americans expect from Washington is action that matches the sense of urgency they feel in their daily lives—action that's swift, bold and wise enough for us to climb out of this crisis.

Because each day we wait to begin the work of turning our economy around, more people lose their jobs, their savings and their homes. And if nothing is done, this recession might linger for years. Our economy will lose 5 million more jobs. Unemployment will approach double digits. Our nation will sink deeper into a crisis that, at some point, we may not be able to reverse.

That's why I feel such a sense of urgency about the recovery plan before Congress. With it, we will create or save more than 3 million jobs over the next two years, provide immediate tax relief to 95 percent of American workers, ignite spending by businesses and consumers alike, and take steps to strengthen our country for years to come.

This plan is more than a prescription for short-term spending—it's a strategy for America's long-term growth and opportunity in areas such as renewable energy, health care and education. And it's a strategy that will be implemented with unprecedented transparency and accountability, so Americans know where their tax dollars are going and how they are spent.

In recent days, there have been misguided criticisms of this plan that echo the failed theories that helped lead us into this crisis—the notion that tax cuts alone will solve all our problems; that we can meet our enormous tests with half-steps and piecemeal measures; that we can ignore fundamental challenges such as energy independence and the high cost of health care and still expect our economy and our country to thrive.

I reject these theories, and so did the American people when they went to the polls in November and voted resoundingly for change. They know that we have tried it those ways for too long. And because we have, our health-care costs still rise faster than inflation. Our dependence on foreign oil still threatens our economy and our security. Our children still study in schools that put them at a disadvantage. We've seen the tragic consequences when our bridges crumble and our levees fail.

Every day, our economy gets sicker—and the time for a remedy that puts Americans back to work, jump-starts our economy and invests in lasting growth is now.

Now is the time to protect health insurance for the more than 8 million Americans at risk of losing their coverage and to computerize the health-care records of every American within five years, saving billions of dollars and countless lives in the process.

Now is the time to save billions by making 2 million homes and 75 percent of federal buildings more energy-efficient, and to double our capacity to generate alternative sources of energy within three years.

Now is the time to give our children every advantage they need to compete by upgrading 10,000 schools with state-of-the-art classrooms, libraries and labs; by training our teachers in math and science; and by bringing the dream of a college education within reach for millions of Americans.

And now is the time to create the jobs that remake America for the 21st century by rebuilding crumbling roads, bridges and levees; designing a smart electrical grid; and connecting every corner of the country to the information superhighway.

These are the actions Americans expect us to take without delay. They're patient enough to know that our economic recovery will be measured in years, not months. But they have no patience for the same old partisan gridlock that stands in the way of action while our economy continues to slide.

So we have a choice to make. We can once again let Washington's bad habits stand in the way of progress. Or we can pull together and say that in America, our destiny isn't written for us but by us. We can place good ideas ahead of old ideological battles, and a sense of purpose above the same narrow partisanship. We can act boldly to turn crisis into opportunity and, together, write the next great chapter in our history and meet the test of our time.

Stimulus must include a plan for debt repayment

By LOUIS GINGERELLA
SPECIAL TO THE HARTFORD COURANT

Regardless of the specifics of President Barack Obama's stimulus plan, the dollar amount or where it will be spent, all of the money for this action will be borrowed. This plan has the potential to become a perpetual burden for future generations. To avoid that, any stimulus package must include a mechanism for repayment of the resulting debt.

Consider this: Of the $820 billion stimulus package, roughly $220 billion will be used to buy capital assets—items such as buildings, autos and equipment. In the past, the federal government has borrowed to buy such assets using perpetual debt. Money borrowed to buy such assets over the last 50 years has never been repaid. Our debt has only gone up during that time.

It is more than likely that many of the assets purchased over the past 50 years were long ago sent to the scrap heap. And we continue to pay interest on the debt that funded those purchases with no plan to ever pay it off.

To avoid compounding the problem, any funds borrowed under the stimulus plan to purchase capital assets should include a suitable amortization time frame for complete repayment. Given the economy, interest-only payments would be made for now. However, principal payments would commence once economic data confirm the recession is over. Then, tax collections or reductions in federal government spending equal to the amortization of this debt would need to be part of any future budget.

Simply put, by the time the assets purchased under this plan are worn out, the debt used to fund those purchases should be gone as well.

The balance, $600 billion, is borrowed to fund program costs or tax relief. Although this is arguably a good thing to do, no tangible assets are acquired with any of these funds.

Again, Congress should stipulate that repayment of this portion would occur shortly after the end of the recession. It would be reasonable and fiscally responsible to expect the repayment be made over only several years, or the life span of a typical economic expansion. The argument for spending this money is to create an economic recovery, so once that is accomplished we need to pay for it within that economic recovery.

This structure will require the federal government display great fiscal restraint during the next economic expansion—a good thing. By paying off the soft-cost items funded with this stimulus debt during the next economic expansion, when the next recession hits, the federal government will hold greater capacity to fund any then-needed stimulus packages. And by systematically paying off the debt used to buy assets, as those assets are used up, the federal government will have greater capacity to borrow again to acquire then-needed new capital assets.

It is not fiscally sound for this stimulus plan's debt to survive in perpetuity.

Indeed, for another day, but soon, we should examine how we might repay most if not all of the present federal debt. It can be done. That way the debts incurred by this generation do not become the burden of the generations that follow.

Gingerella teaches accounting and finance in the MBA program at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Hartford, Conn., campus. Before that he spent 25 years in banking, primarily in commercial lending.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cold, hard reality

In response to the letter to the editor called "Oil money loses, we win" written by the grimy old billy goat, Rep. Stanley McGinnis Torres at the CNMI perpetual legislature, we suggest that the use of actual facts would serve the public better and would simultaneously make him look less like a crackpot and more like an honest man. Of course, the history of Mr. Torres histrionic hyperbole is well known, and to expect him to rein it in is as implausible as expecting Ben Fitial to stop his drive-by racist shouting ways. Oh, well.

Life on Saipan will no doubt go on (minimally) even as the Commonwealth strives to regain its former glory as a talaya-fishing, banana-picking subsistence indigenous economy. Before signing off on this enlightening reply to the old drivel-doer himself, we really should help to set the record straight for Mr. Torres, et al. Mr. Torres wrote of the proud...citizens of the Commonwealth in voluntary political alliance with the USA. Well, that isn't exactly how it is, Mr. Torres. Oh, the citizens may be proud all right, some of them. However, the Commonwealth exists in political *union* with the great USA, not in alliance with it. An alliance is formed only by treaty between sovereign independent states. The Marianas have never been a sovereign state. Not now, not ever. The Marianas were not a political state prior to 1521 when Magellan sailed through and have been governed by other entities ever since. And that is the cold, hard, historical reality of it, all illusions, delusions and pretenses aside.

Furthermore, the word "union" derives from the Latin, unis, meaning one as in uno and as in *one* nation under God, indivisible...etc. Yes, indivisible, Stanley. There is no alliance between the CNMI and the USA. The CNMI is USA as much California, Florida, New York and Washington are. And that's the way it is.

Finally, you really ought to drop the self-deceiving false notion that the union with the USA is voluntary. It is not. It is an obligation and has been that way since the day the political Covenant with the USA was signed and adopted by both parties. This reality check is offered with the sincerest goodwill. Enjoy the sun, surf and free coconuts.

Carlos J. Naranja Jr.
Boca Raton, FL

Integrity and honor

As we stated earlier, an investigation toward an impeachment will never materialize. We agree with one's innocence until proven guilty, but we disagree when our government and our homeland's integrity is disgraced. Lt. Governor, Timothy Villagomez has no moral convictions because he continues to hold an office of integrity and honor while being charged with a serious crime. On many occasion we have asked that he resign or step down until such time that his innocence prevail. To this day he continues to disrespect the people of the Commonwealth. Cultural excuses, especially the term "respect," is an embarrassment coming from some legislative members who they themselves have no respect for the public office they represent.

The "what if " scenario is moot, for any public official charged with a serious crime should take a leave of absence regardless, especially the Lt. Governor.

Show some respect for the oppressed, depressed and suffering people of the Commonwealth.

Gregorio Cruz Jr.
Taotao Tano CNMI Inc.

Is government killing our people?

Let me briefly explain the subject. I have noticed the decline of safety markings and lighting on our roads. I went to the spot where a man was killed on Beach Road, close to the high school. The road was so dark you could not see anyone standing beside or on the road. Why were the street lights not working?

Many roads lack a center line, for example Isa Road, parts of Middle Road, Airport Road, there are many others! The center lines are lacking on curves, the most dangerous place. The lack of center lines is a cause of head-on crashes, the deadliest kind of accident. Also, the required lines at the roads' edge, crossings, and directional markers are almost all gone. These are safety issues that must be dealt with. How much does paint cost, the life of a family member?

For example, go through the intersection of Isa and Middle roads at night. Did you notice that there is only one dim light at that intersection? It is hard to know where to make your turn because you cannot see the road markings, some of which are also missing. People also stand beside the road there and are very difficult to see at night.

My conclusion is the government does not care enough about the people to protect them from road accidents. These accidents kill people. Who will take responsibility?? Government should set priorities and fund the basic needs of the people and safety is a No. 1 responsibility. I do not want to hear "There is no money"; that is a cop out!

We must tell the legislators and governor to stop spending money on "feel good" things just to get votes and to start taking care of our people's lives.

I am just waiting for the next person to get killed because of government's failure to provide basic safety. Who will it be? If a legislator's child or spouse gets killed, perhaps they will pay attention.

Frank Stewart
Capital Hill, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲82	▼75
Palau	Cloudy	▲88	▼78
Yap	Showers	▲89	▼77
Chuuk	Rain	▲87	▼76
Pohnpei	Showers	▲84	▼80
Kosrae	Cloudy	▲89	▼77
Majuro	Showers	▲85	▼77

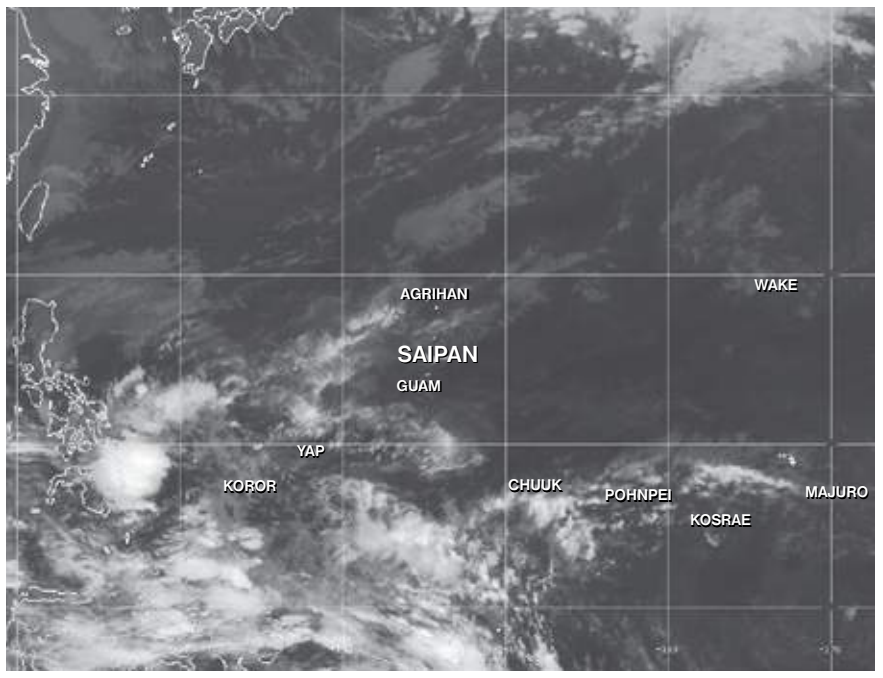
Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲77	▼69
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲52	▼24
Hong Kong	Partly Sunny	▲76	▼67
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲78	▼68
London	Mostly Cloudy	▲36	▼32
Los Angeles	Thunderstorms	▲58	▼48
Manila	Rain	▲80	▼73
Melbourne	Hot	▲101	▼72
Miami	Cloudy	▲74	▼62
New York	Partly Sunny	▲49	▼37
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	▲51	▼40
Paris	Rain	▲39	▼27
Pusan	Cloudy	▲59	▼37
Rome	Showers	▲55	▼42
Salem	Partly Sunny	▲47	▼36
San Francisco	Partly Sunny	▲57	▼45
Seoul	Cloudy	▲47	▼23
Tokyo	Showers	▲51	▼41
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲54	▼39

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
7:02 AM Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
11:54 AM Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet
4:46 PM Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, FRIDAY, FEB. 6, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough extends southeastward from 8N130E to 2N140E to end at EQ147E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are found within 200 miles of the trough axis east of 135E and up to 300 miles north of the trough axis west of 135E. This area includes Palau. Scattered trade-wind showers are occurring south of Chuuk between 3N and 6N from 150E to 155E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:45 AM	6:18 PM
Sunday	6:44 AM	6:18 PM
Monday	6:44 AM	6:19 PM
Tuesday	6:44 AM	6:19 PM
Wednesday	6:43 AM	6:19 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	3:49 PM	4:17 AM
Sunday	4:55 PM	5:15 AM
Monday	5:59 PM	6:08 AM
Tuesday	6:59 PM	6:55 AM
Wednesday	7:56 PM	7:39 AM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Sunday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $182. Off-island subscription rate is $376 per year. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
9:00 AM
Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158
Pastor JJ Matsumoto

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group
8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church
(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio

Sunday		
	9am	Sunday school
	10am	Regular worship
	6pm	worship
Wednesday		
	7pm	worship

Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries

Sunday	5:30am-6:30am	
Morning prayer		
	7am-9am	English service
	7am-9am	Sunday school
	10am-12noon	English service,
Koblerville		
Wednesday	7pm-9pm	Prayer meeting
Saturday	7pm-9pm	Tagalog service

Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

FEBRUARY 7, 2000

US Senate tackles takeover proposal
The U.S. Senate is expected to begin deliberation this week on legislation seeking extension of federal immigration laws to the Northern Marianas for possible voting on the floor by members. It is scheduled to resume session Monday afternoon (Washington D.C. time) to begin consideration of S. 1052 which is the bill that will allow automatic federal takeover of the island's immigration standards. The move came after the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which has oversight of U.S. insular areas like the CNMI, recommended favorably last November for its passage and was immediately placed on the legislative calendar for voting.

Consortium joins protest against CUC decision
Another front-runner vying to build a new power plant for Saipan has opposed the decision by the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation to scale back the project as it contested the evaluation conducted by independent experts on various proposals submitted by bidders. The consortium of Tomen, Alsons, Singapore Power and Tan Holdings Corp. joined other bidders in protesting the cancellation of the initial plan on the controversial project, saying CUC should instead allow the construction of the 80-megawatt generation capacity by phases. Noting it board's action to collapse the original request for proposal (RFP) in favor of a fresh round of bidding, this time for a 60-MW plant, the consortium believed this could set back the entire project and jeopardize the island's economy.

FEBRUARY 7, 2001

Cabrera fires Arriola as counsel
Former Finance Secretary Antonio R. Cabrera decided to strip private lawyer Joey A. Arriola of authority to represent him in the remainder of his corruption case, informing the US District Court yesterday of his intention to seek new counsel. The unexpected turn of events prompted District Judge Alex R. Munson to reset Mr. Cabrera's sentencing date to Feb. 22, 2001, after the ex-government official requested for a 45-day continuance which the court viewed as unreasonable. During his would-be sentence hearing yesterday, Mr. Cabrera informed the court of his decision not to retain the services of his private counsel, at the astonishment of everyone present, even Mr. Arriola himself. It was not clear why Mr. Cabrera made the move.

Gov't, CUC share the same dilemma
The CNMI government and the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation found themselves whining on the same boat. The government may be forced to operate in pitch darkness should power supply is disconnected while CUC may be constrained to shut down power plants once it stopped receiving fuel shipments. Both face the same problems because of shared deficiency—their inability to settle mounting debts, the government to CUC, and the utility corporation to Mobil Oil Marianas. But unlike the government, CUC enjoys the support of businesses and residents who rally behind its decision to disconnect electricity of government offices and departments which persistently failed to settle mounting bills.

FEBRUARY 7, 2002

Governor imposes stricter cost-cutting measures
In a bid to cut costs further, Gov. Juan N. Babauta has issued a directive outlining specific steps that would help the administration save an average 10 percent in its operational expenditures. The directive, dated January 31 and addressed to all Executive Branch offices, departments and activity heads, also creates an expenditure control task force that would ensure that cost-cutting goals are met within the next 60 days. Babauta said these measures take effect immediately. "Projected revenues for the current fiscal year are $13.6 million less than budgeted expenses. This has been the case since before the beginning of the calendar year, yet allotments for the second quarter were not adjusted down to address the shortfall," said Babauta.

New management to take over Payless Supermarket
The employment of at least 25 Payless Supermarket workers is in limbo until the store's new management-the owner of San Jose Mart and 99 Cents Supermarket-decides what to do with them. The new management will take over Payless Supermarket beginning Monday, February 11. Town House, Inc. on Tuesday reached an agreement to transfer the Payless Supermarket operations to Yun's Corporation. Hon Jun Yoon, president of Yun's Corp., and Kenneth T. Jones, president of Town House, Inc., signed the documents transferring the operations beginning Tuesday.

Business

Pink slips stack up as recession drags on

WASHINGTON (AP)—Worn down by a drawn-out recession, cost-cutting employers are laying off workers at an alarming clip and there's no end in sight.

The Labor Department releases a report Friday expected to show that January was another cruel month for workers and companies.

With employers in no mood to hire, the unemployment rate is expected to jump to 7.5 percent in January from 7.2 percent in December, according to economists' forecasts. If they are right, that would mark the highest jobless rate in 17 years.

And after suffering heavy job losses last year, the country probably lost another 524,000 jobs last month, getting the new year off to a rotten start. Some think the number of jobs reductions in January will be higher—600,000 or 700,000.

Employers are slashing payrolls and turning to other ways to cut costs—including trimming workers' hours, freezing wages or cutting pay—to cope with shrinking appetites from customers in the United States and in other countries, which are struggling with their own economic troubles.

"It is as rocky as I've ever seen it. Businesses have seen such revenue shortfalls that they are really up against the wall and have no choice but to cut workers," said Mark Vitner, an economist at Wachovia Corp.

An avalanche of layoffs is slamming the nation from a wide swath of employers.

Caterpillar Inc., Pfizer Inc., Microsoft Corp., Estee Lauder Cos., Time Warner Cable Inc., and Sprint Nextel Corp. are among the companies slicing payrolls. Manufacturers—especially car makers—construction companies and retailers have been particularly hard hit by the recession. Talbots Inc., Liz Claiborne Inc., Macy's Inc. and Home Depot Inc. are all cutting jobs. So are Detroit's General Motors Corp. and Ford Motor Co.

Americans cut back sharply on spending at the end of last year, thrusting the economy into its worst backslide in a quarter-century. The tailspin could well accelerate in the current January-to-March quarter to a rate of 5 percent or more as the recession drags on into a second year and consumers and businesses burrow deeper under all the economy's negative forces.

Watchdog says Treasury overpaid for bank stocks

WASHINGTON (AP)—The federal government overpaid for stocks and other assets in attempting to help financial institutions last year, a government watchdog said Thursday, taking further issue with the beleaguered $700 billion rescue program.

Elizabeth Warren, chairwoman of the Congressional Oversight Panel for the bailout funds, told the Senate Banking Committee on Thursday that Treasury in 2008 paid $254 billion and received assets worth about $176 billion.

The figures were reached by extrapolating the results of a study of 10 government transactions, comparing the price paid by Treasury and the value of the asset at the time of purchase. Warren did not present details of the transactions the panel analyzed. A full report will be released Friday.

In a bright spot for the rescue program, however, banks that received capital infusions from Treasury have already paid $271 million in dividends to the federal government. A Treasury official said Thursday that banks are expected to pay more than $1.5 billion in dividends by the end of this month. Among them is Wells Fargo, which received a $25 billion infusion. The bank announced this week it would pay Treasury $371 million in dividends.

Still, lawmakers and watchdog groups continued to express frustration with the implementation of the rescue plan, known as the Troubled Asset Relief Program. Congress approved the plan last fall, but members of both parties criticized spending decisions by the Bush administration and former Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson.

The misgivings come as new Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner is preparing to place the Obama administration's imprint on the program with a sweeping new framework for helping banks, loosening credit and helping reduce foreclosures. Geithner plans to unveil the changes next week.

"The plan will strengthen transparency and accountability measures so that taxpayers know where and how their money is being spent and whether it's achieving real results," said Treasury spokesman Isaac Baker.

Referring to overpayment on assets, Warren said Treasury has failed to specify its goals and methods in helping more than 300 institutions.

Nation

Obama admin. seeks treaty to cut US, Russia nukes

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Obama administration, reversing the Bush administration's limited interest in nuclear disarmament, is gearing up for early negotiations with Russia on a new treaty that would sharply reduce stockpiles of nuclear warheads.

Obama

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has notified Congress and her staff that she intends to get started quickly on talks with the Russians, who have voiced interest in recent weeks in settling on a new treaty calling for cutbacks in arsenals on both sides.

The 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty expires at the end of the year. It limited the United States and Russia to 6,000 nuclear warheads each. The American stockpile is believed to be about 2,300 warheads, and the Russians' even lower.

Clinton's spokesman, Robert Wood, said the new administration was serious about negotiating reductions in nuclear weapons. A replacement treaty for START "will be put on a fast track," Wood said.

President Barack Obama said during the campaign that he would seek verifiable reductions in all U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons. Clinton told Congress last month that deep reductions were the goal.

Clinton has told her staff she intends to get started quickly on talks with the Russians, said an administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the subject.

Some key arms control posts in the new administration have not been filled, however, and that might slow preparations for talks.

"I can't give you a time frame when we will be able to complete a review," Wood said in an interview Thursday. In that vein, he said, the administration was "clearly committed to reducing the numbers" but has not decided how deep to slash.

Internal talks on what position the U.S. should take in overall disarmament have begun within the State Department and with the White House, said officials aware of the discussions. Those discussions are expected to accelerate when the key posts are filled, said the officials, who asked for anonymity because they were not authorized to talk publicly.

Charges dropped vs. suspect in 2000 USS *Cole* blast

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Pentagon's senior judge overseeing terror trials at Guantanamo Bay dropped charges Thursday against an al-Qaida suspect in the 2000 USS *Cole* bombing, upholding President Barack Obama's order to freeze military tribunals there. The charges against suspected al-Qaida bomber Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri marked the last active Guantanamo war crimes case.

The legal move by Susan J. Crawford, the top legal authority for military trials at Guantanamo, brings all cases into compliance with Obama's Jan. 22 executive order to halt terrorist court proceedings at the U.S. Navy base in Cuba.

Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said Crawford dismissed the charges against al-Nashiri without prejudice. That means new charges can be brought again later. He will remain in prison for the time being.

"It was her decision, but it reflects the fact that the president has issued an executive order which mandates that the military commissions be halted, pending the outcome of several reviews of our operations down at Guantanamo," Morrell said late Thursday night.

The ruling also gives the White House time to review the legal cases of all 245 terror suspects held there and decide whether they should be prosecuted in the U.S. or released to other nations.

Obama was expected to meet with families of *Cole* and 9/11 victims at the White House on Friday afternoon to announce the move.

Seventeen U.S. sailors died on Oct. 12, 2000, when al-Qaida suicide bombers steered an explosives-laden boat into the *Cole*, a guided-missile destroyer, as it sat in a Yemen port.

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ACROSS THE NATION

Senate struggles on stimulus in nighttime session

WASHINGTON (AP)—In an uncertain reach across party lines, Senate moderates struggled for a compromise on economic stimulus legislation Thursday as the government spit out grim new jobless figures and President Barack Obama warned of more bad news ahead. With partisan tensions rising, several Republican attempts to remake the bill—with higher tax cuts, lower spending and fresh relief for homeowners—failed on party-line votes. "This is the moment for leadership that matches the great test of our time," Obama said Thursday night as the Senate plodded through a fourth day of debate on the legislation at the heart of his economic recovery plan. Earlier, he declared, "The time for talk is over. The time for action is now." The president added he would "love to see additional improvements" in the bill, a gesture to the moderates from both parties who were at work trying to trim the bill with a newly recalculated, $937 billion price tag.

Justice Ginsburg has pancreatic cancer surgery

WASHINGTON (AP)—Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had surgery Thursday for pancreatic cancer, raising the possibility that one of the ideologically divided court's leading liberals—and its only woman—might have to curtail her work or even step down before she had planned. Ginsburg, 75, has been a justice since 1993. She has been increasingly vocal in recent years about the court's more conservative stances, especially after the appointments made by President George W. Bush. Pancreatic cancer is often deadly, although the court said doctors apparently found Ginsburg's growth at an early stage. In 1999, she had colon cancer surgery, underwent radiation and chemotherapy, and never missed a day on the bench. Statistics suggest this could be a tougher fight.

Calif. octuplets' mom's veil of secrecy vanishes

WHITTIER, Calif. (AP)—The veil of secrecy octuplets' mother Nadya Suleman shrouded herself in for more than a week was lifted Thursday with the release of public documents showing that the 33-year-old struggled with depression for years until she finally began to realize her childhood dream of having a huge family. Suleman, who now has 14 children, told doctors she battled with depression for years after she was injured in a riot in 1999 at the state mental hospital where she worked. The doctors' reports were included in more than 300 pages of documents released to The Associated Press by the state Division of Workers' Compensation on the same day NBC released excerpts of Suleman's first interview since giving birth last month. Among other things, the documents reveal that Suleman collected more than $165,000 in disability payments between 2002 and 2008 for an injury she said left her in near-constant pain and helped end her marriage.

Asia

Sri Lanka war nears end but...

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—The Sri Lankan government is poised to crush the Tamil Tiger rebels and end a quarter-century civil war that has killed tens of thousands. But it still faces a major challenge beyond the battlefield: resolving the ethnic conflict that fueled the uprising.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa has consistently expressed support for a deal to give the ethnic Tamil minority on this South Asian island nation more say in a government long dominated by the Sinhalese majority.

"The sowing of discord belongs to the past. The future belongs to those who sow the seeds of unity," he said in a speech Wednesday marking Independence Day.

Critics welcome the words, but they say little has actually been done to reconcile the ethnic groups.

"The military machine is in full action ... in the political arena there is no movement at all," said independent lawmaker Mano Ganesan, who is Tamil. "The causes that led to the creation of Tamil nationalism, and from Tamil nationalism to Tamil extremism, and from Tamil extremism to Tamil terrorism, they very much exist today."

The ethnic conflict traces back to Sri Lanka's independence from Britain 61 years ago, when the mainly Buddhist Sinhalese took power after decades of what they saw as British favoritism toward the mainly Hindu Tamils.

In the ensuing years, successive governments dominated by the Sinhalese pushed policies favoring their language and community and marginalizing Tamils. By the 1970s, a patchwork of rival Tamil political and militant groups began calling for a separate state in the historic Tamil heartlands of the north and east, which they called Eelam.

War broke out in 1983 when Tamil Tiger guerrillas killed 13 soldiers in an ambush and Sinhalese mobs retaliated with anti-Tamil riots that human rights groups say killed as many as 2,000 people.

Thousands of Tamils joined the rebels, known formally as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Tens of thousands of others fled abroad, creating a Tamil diaspora that has been a rich source of funding for the rebels.

The Tamil community accounts for about 18 percent of Sri Lanka's 20 million people, and Sinhalese comprise about 74 percent. Most of the rest are Muslims.

The government says that once it finishes off the rebels it will be willing to devolve some power to the provinces, giving Tamils, with large populations in the north and east, a significant say in local affairs.

It also promises a big influx of economic aid for development in the north.

All the buzz: Pot scandal jolts Japan's sumo world

TOKYO (AP)—Sumo wrestlers with pot bellies, yes. Sumo wrestlers with pot? Now that's harder to grapple with.

In the past six months, four wrestlers have been kicked out of the ancient sport for allegedly smoking marijuana, creating the biggest drugs-in-sports scandal that Japan has ever seen.

Although three of the wrestlers who have been expelled from the sport were from Russia, the arrest last week of a 25-year-old Japanese athlete who goes by the ring name of Wakakirin for possession of marijuana has raised concern that use of the drug may be more widespread than originally thought.

In Japan, sumo wrestlers are not seen as athletes in the way that baseball or tennis players are. A photo of U.S. swimming star Michael Phelps with a marijuana pipe got wide play in the media here, but nowhere near the consternation of the sumo scandal.

The sting of the busts in sumo—which only recently introduced doping tests—was made all the worse because of the breakdown in Japan's still relatively drug-free environment. Marijuana use, in particular, is rising rapidly despite a stiff punishment—up to five years in prison for possession.

"We are appalled by his utter folly," The Asahi, a major newspaper, said in an outraged editorial. "Some young people casually try pot. It is vital that we educate them on the risks of this drug from a fairly early age."

More than being simply a drug issue, however, the scandal has been amplified by the fact that it involves one of the world's oldest and most tradition-bound sports—and one that is solidly rooted in religious purification ritual.

Sumo wrestlers are expected to live the old-school life of a disciple. They wear their hair in topknots, dress in traditional robes and train in communal "stables." Their schedules are tightly regulated and the word of their coaches, who are still called "masters," is absolute and final.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Pakistan: Suicide bomb kills 24 near Shiite mosque

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—A suicide bomber blew himself up among worshippers streaming toward a Shiite Muslim mosque in central Pakistan, killing 24 people and wounding dozens more. The attack in the city of Dera Ghazi Khan on Thursday risks sparking sectarian fury in a country already battling rising militancy along the Afghan border and tension with India over the Mumbai terrorist attacks. The bomb detonated as a crowd approached the mosque for an evening prayer ceremony. Television footage showed bystanders and emergency workers trying frantically to help victims lying in the darkened street. Athar Mubarak, the city police chief, said the bomb contained metal balls and nails. As well as the 24 dead, another 40 people were wounded, he said. "Evidence collected from the spot indicates that a suicide bomber blew himself up in the crowd," Mubarak said.

Kyrgyzstan: talks on US base continue

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan (AP)—Kyrgyzstan is still in talks with the United States over a key U.S. air base that the Kyrgyz president wants closed, the country's prime minister said Thursday. Lawmakers earlier decided to delay until next week a vote on a plan to close the Manas air base, which is an important element in the U.S. and NATO military campaign in Afghanistan. The delay appeared to give the United States additional time to persuade Kyrgyzstan to back off from the closure decision announced Tuesday by President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Kyrgyz officials previously had said the closure decision was irreversible. Prime Minister Igor Chudinov did not give details, but said "We are in the process of negotiations with the Americans."

Disasters cost China nearly $200 billion last year

BEIJING (AP)—China says natural disasters including the devastating Sichuan earthquake cost the country almost $200 billion last year. The Ministry of Civil Affairs says disasters left 88,928 people dead or missing, the vast majority of them in last May's magnitude-7.9 quake. The earthquake left millions of people without homes or jobs. Earlier in the year, freak snowstorms in parts of southern and central China badly damaged power lines and other infrastructure. The ministry said on its Web site Thursday that disasters inflicted direct economic losses of about 1.35 trillion yuan ($198 billion) last year, nearly five times more than in 2007.

World

Iraqi PM's bloc wins provincial vote

AP

Men gather in a cafe to watch televised coverage of the results in Iraq's provincial elections in Najaf, 160 kilometers (100 miles) south of Baghdad, Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009.

BAGHDAD (AP)—Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's allies swept to victory over Shiite religious parties during last weekend's provincial elections in Iraq—a rousing endorsement of his crackdown on extremists, according to official results released Thursday.

The impressive showing, which must be certified by international and Iraqi observers, places al-Maliki in a strong position before parliamentary elections late this year and could bolster U.S. confidence that it can begin withdrawing more of its 140,000 troops.

The results were a major blow to Iraq's biggest Shiite religious party—the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council—which trailed in every Shiite province including its base in the holy city of Najaf.

Still, the margin of victory in a number of Shiite provinces was narrow, indicating the prime minister's supporters will have to cut deals with their rivals in order to govern.

And al-Maliki's Coalition of the State of Law gained little traction in Sunni areas, suggesting that sectarian divisions still play a major role in Iraqi politics. Al-Maliki is himself a Shiite from a religious party but his bloc ran on a platform against sectarianism.

Some Western diplomats believe al-Maliki's biggest problem now will be fending off challenges from fellow Shiites as well as Sunnis and Kurds—who all underestimated him two years ago but now have a strong vested interest in curbing his power.

US Navy watches as Somali pirates nab $3.2M

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—As U.S. Navy ships looked on, Somali pirates sped away Thursday with $3.2 million in ransom after releasing an arms-laden Ukrainian freighter—ending a four-month standoff that focused world attention on piracy off Somalia's lawless coast.

The Navy said it couldn't seize the bandits for fear of endangering 147 other seamen still held hostage on other hijacked ships.

So, within sight of two nearby U.S. warships, the pirates counted the cash—air-dropped by parachute—then took off in motorboats, pirate Aden Abdi Omar said, speaking to The Associated Press by satellite phone after arriving in the central Somali town of Harardhere.

"We are not holding it (the ship) anymore," said Omar, adding that more than two dozen pirates made their escape aboard motorized skiffs, navigating the choppy waters in small groups.

The $3.2 million booty—among the largest-ever reported ransoms—would be divvied up among the pirates, he said.

WORLD BRIEFS

Israel seizes Lebanese ship carrying aid for Gaza

JERUSALEM (AP)—The Israeli navy intercepted a ship carrying humanitarian supplies from Lebanon to the Gaza Strip and towed the vessel into port Thursday, foiling a new attempt by international activists to break Israel's blockade of the P alestinian territory. It was the first time Israeli forces seized an aid ship, after the navy let some boats in and turned others around. The interception was condemned by Lebanon and Syria, adding to regional tensions in the wake of last month's devastating Israeli offensive against the Islamic militants of Hamas who control Gaza. Talks in Egypt to cement a long-term cease-fire in Gaza ran into obstacles Thursday. A Hamas delegation left Cairo without agreeing to a truce deal. In an apparent slap at Hamas, Egyptian officials reported that security officers frisked the delegation returning to Gaza and confiscated $9.5 million to $11.5 million in dollars and euros. The cash was deposited in an account in Egypt, and the delegation was allowed to return to Gaza, a security official said. It was not clear what would happen to the money.

Ships collide in Antarctic whaling clash

SYDNEY (AP)—A boat carrying a group of radical anti-whaling activists collided with a Japanese whaling vessel in the Antarctic Ocean on Friday in a clash Japan condemned as "unforgivable." No one was injured. Activist Paul Watson of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society said his boat was trying to prevent a Japanese ship from dragging a whale on board when another Japanese boat shot in front of Watson's vessel, causing a collision. "The situation down here is getting very, very chaotic and very aggressive," Watson told The Associated Press by satellite phone from his boat, named after the late Australian conservationist and TV personality, Steve Irwin. In a statement, the Institute of Cetacean Research—the Japanese government-affiliated organization that oversees the hunt—condemned the protesters' actions, characterizing the collision as a "deliberate ramming" that occurred while the Japanese were trying to load a whale on board one of their ships.

Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

Saturday, February 7, 2009

Fund for jobless OFWs raised to P1B

MANILA, Philippines—The government's livelihood fund for overseas Filipino workers who could lose their jobs amid the global economic crisis has been increased four-fold to P1 billion, according to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Speaking before Filipinos in Bahrain on Tuesday, Ms Arroyo said that the government had drawn up a "reciprocity program" or "payback" package for overseas workers who would be laid off.

"The first part is the expatriate livelihood support fund in the amount of P1 billion, which will be funded by the OWWA (Overseas Workers Welfare Administration) and supported by government lending institutions, such as Development Bank of the Philippines and Landbank," she said in her speech.

The fund, originally pegged at P250 million, could be used to provide loans for returning workers who want to acquire new skills, undergo retraining or start a business.

"Our efforts include setting up retraining programs in the Philippines, for call center agents, welders, bakers, and chefs," she said.

Ms Arroyo has instructed Labor Secretary Marianito Roque to draw simple and clear guidelines for the implementation of the fund.

"I told him that returning expatriates should not be burdened by red tape," she said.

Contingency measures

The government has been preparing contingency measures for at least 50,000 overseas workers who could lose their jobs as foreign companies cut down payrolls, shut down or merge with others.

An alliance of overseas Filipino workers in the Middle East on Wednesday called on the retrenched OFWs back in the Philippines to avail of the livelihood support fund.

"The livelihood assistance program was made possible because of our strong demand and continued campaign to provide relief to laid off OFWs and their families," John Leonard Monterona, Migrante-ME East regional coordinator, said in an e-mailed statement from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Monterona said part of the money came from the OFWs' contributions ($25 each) to the OWWA.

Help desks

All laid off OFWs, Monterona said, should enlist themselves and "actively pursue" other benefits at OWWA and the Department of Labor and Employment.

The second part of the program is for the government to help expatriates find related jobs in the country with the setting up of "help desks" in every province, Ms Arroyo said.

"We match the jobseeker with the job," she said. "There is also online information about job openings that could be accessed at www.phil-job.net."

The President said the government could fund the programs because "the Philippines remains an island of stability in an otherwise stormy global sea of economic troubles."

Saudi King Abdullah has committed to send a high-level business mission to Manila to "look for investment opportunities" in the agriculture sector, Malacañang said in a statement.

Ms Arroyo arrived in Bahrain on Tuesday from Riyadh, where she announced that the government, through the Professional Regulations Committee (PRC), would hold licensure examinations for workers in Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong "to prepare them for skilled jobs that command higher salaries." ***(Reports from TJ Burgonio and Jerome Aning, and Joel Guinto, INQUIRER.net)***

NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST AP

Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, left, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of Calif. listen to President Barack Obama speak at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009.

RP may lift ban on OFWs in Iraq

MANILA, Philippines (AFP)—The Philippine government is to send a delegation to Iraq next week to evaluate whether to lift a ban on Filipinos working there, a labor department official said Thursday.

The mission will include members of the labor and foreign affairs departments, said Jennifer Manalili, administrator of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo banned the deployment of Filipino workers to Iraq in 2004 after a Filipino truck driver was kidnapped and threatened with beheading.

The driver was later released unharmed after Arroyo withdrew the country's small contingent of troops and police.

Despite the ban an estimated 10,000 Filipinos work in Iraq.

An official Iraqi delegation was in Manila recently and called on the government to lift its ban, saying the country needed foreign workers to help it rebuild.

Green passports valid until expiration

By VERONICA UY
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—The green passports issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) are still valid until their date of expiration, Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Domingo Lucenario said Thursday.

In an interview, Lucenario belied the news circulating in e-mail groups that those who renew their green passports will get new ones valid only until the end of 2009.

He said he has already requested the international community—through the Philippines' foreign posts and the foreign embassies based here—to continue recognizing the green passports, which are not machine-readable.

At the same time, he encouraged all Filipinos with valid green passports to apply for machine-readable passports to avoid being inconvenienced at various points of exit and entry worldwide.

According to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), all countries must issue machine-readable passports by April 1, 2010. The Philippines started issuing the new travel documents starting September 2007.

"The green non-machine readable passports issued before the ICAO deadline are valid until their expiration," he said.

LABOR FRONT

Employer's capability to pay the workers

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Q: How does Labor determine an employer's capability to meet financial obligations to his or her alien employees?

A: According to the Department of Labor, an employer must be financially able to meet the obligations of an employment contract. The Labor's Employment Rules and Regulations states that the Labor Director shall evaluate employer financial capability upon receipt of an application for an approved employment contract (initial, renewal, or transfer).

■ ■ ■

Q: What are the financial requirements for business and non-business employers?

A: The Regulations state that the Labor Director may request such evidence of financial capability as is required for an evaluation of the financial capability of the business. The Director may reject an application for an approved employment contract upon a finding that the employer has presented insufficient evidence that he/she is financially capable.

A non-business employer refers to a single individual person who is not incorporated or operating as a partnership or limited liability company and who does not have a business license. Non-business employers may employ full-time alien workers only as domestic helpers, farmers, household maintenance workers, and yard workers.

Non-business employers must not currently be receiving nor within the past year have received assistance from the Nutrition Assistance Program, Security Supplemental Income from the Social Security Administration, any government subsidy in the form of public utilities from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., or low income housing from the Mariana Islands Housing Authority.

A non-business employer must earn an annual wage or salary equal to or greater than 150 percent of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines for the State of Hawaii.

■ ■ ■

Q: If an employer has a pending Labor complaint, can Labor still consider him or her a suitable employer?

A: The Regulations state that an employer with more than one outstanding complaint pending with Labor may not be a suitable employer. Labor says that a proposed employment contract with an alien worker may be rejected if the employer has presented insufficient evidence that outstanding judgments or complaints should not disqualify the employer.

The Regulations state that an employer must have no outstanding judgments arising out of Labor proceedings or outstanding billings on behalf of an alien worker from the Commonwealth Health Center that are more than 60 days in arrears, except matters on appeal.

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$198M for RP war veterans in US stimulus

HONOLULU—The Senate version of the economic stimulus bill being debated in the U.S. Congress includes $198 million in payments to Filipinos who fought for the United States during World War II.

U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye had arranged for the long-awaited compensation to be included in the proposed measure that is expected to cost up to $1 trillion.

About 200,000 Filipinos served alongside U.S. soldiers to defend the Philippines from the 1941 Japanese invasion and resist the subsequent Japanese occupation.

The Philippines was a U.S. colony at the time, and the U.S. military assured Filipinos they could apply for U.S. citizenship and qualify for full U.S. veterans' benefits if they served.

After the war, however, the U.S. Congress passed the Rescission Act of 1946, stripping Filipino veterans of their status as U.S. veterans. This denied Filipinos the benefits they were promised.

The veterans have campaigned for decades to win these benefits back. They've had some victories, including when Congress passed a bill allowing thousands to immigrate and become U.S. citizens. Burial rights in national cemeteries came a decade later.

According to Inouye, about 18,000 veterans are still alive in the Philippines and the United States. Many live in Hawaii and California.

The stimulus bill would award a one-time payment of $15,000 to veterans who are now American citizens and $9,000 to non-citizens.

Inouye, who fought with the U.S. Army in Italy during World War II, said the measure would "close a dark chapter in the history of this country.

"This nation made a solemn promise, and with hardly a hearing, we revoked it," Inouye said in a statement. "This episode is a blight upon the character of the United States, and it must be cleansed."

During the campaign, President Barack Obama voiced support for awarding benefits to the veterans.

Democratic leaders hope for Senate passage of the legislation by Friday at the latest. ***(Philippine Daily Inquirer/ Associated Press)***

NPA attack vs mayor foiled

By AQUILES ZONIO, EDWIN FERNANDEZ, ORLANDO DINOY
MINDANAO BUREAU

KIBLAWAN, Davao del Sur—Suspected communist rebels stormed the residential compound of Mayor Jaime Caminero of this town but were unable to get past the guardhouse as soldiers inside the sprawling property fought them off, police said Thursday.

The rebels, however, managed to disarm the lone guard detailed at the gate in the aborted attack early Wednesday, according to Inspector Tranquilino Nebrada, Kiblawan police chief.

Nebrada said Caminero and his family were inside the house, at the end of the compound in Barangay (village) Latian, when the attack occurred. No one was harmed.

Chief Supertintendent Ceasario Darantinao, Davao del Sur police director, said soldiers were sent to the mayor's compound following reports the New People's Army planned to attack it.

In Tulunan, North Cotabato, which shares a border with this town, at least 300 families fled following clashes between soldiers and rebels on Wednesday.

A report from the Tulunan social welfare office indicated that most of the evacuees are from Manobo communities.

The report said although the clashes took place away from the communities, residents sought refuge in village centers for fear of being caught in the crossfire.

Lieutenant Colojnel Milfredo Meligrito, commander of the Army's 57th Infantry Battalion, said the rebels had earlier ambushed a group of soldiers.

The ambush, he said, triggered in a brief clash in which a certain Commander Adonis was killed.

Meligrito said the guerillas who ambushed his men could be part of a larger NPA unit that ambushed and killed three police officers in Bansalan, Davao del Sur on Monday.

In South Cotabato, police said charges were filed against rebels said to be responsible for the January 29 attacks on the municipal hall, and the police and fire station of Tampakan town.

Three policemen and a civilian were injured in the simultaneous attacks.

PHILIPPINE BRIEFS

MILF suspected in Cotabato village blast

MANILA, Philippines—Suspected members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) bombed a village in the province of North Cotabato Thursday midnight, but no one was reported hurt in the incident, a police report said on Friday. A report from the police regional office said the incident occurred 12:10 a.m. Thursday, where two rounds of mortars were fired by suspected MILF guerrillas towards Barangay (village) Pigcawaran, Alamada town. Police recovered one round of 81mm mortar ammo. ***(INQUIRER.net)***

5 suspected rebels arrested

BACOLOD CITY, Philippines—Patrolling soldiers of the Army's 11th Infantry Battalion arrested what they claimed were five suspected members of the New People's Army (NPA) in Barangay (Village) Buenavista, Himamaylan, Negros Occidental, the military reported. But the human rights group Karapatan said the five were farmers who were arrested illegally. 11th IB commander Lieutenant Colonel Franco Nemesio Gacal said on Tuesday that a team intercepted Rene Boy and Junior Moreno, Ronilo Balismo, Ritchelyn Lozano and Budok Bilado, who were allegedly conducting "ideological political organizational (IPO) work," in the supposedly rebel-infested Sitio (sub-village) Asaran, Buenavista village, Himamaylan City, on Monday. Gacal said the five surrendered peacefully. ***(INQUIRER.net)***

Government workers to protest layoffs

MANILA, Philippines—Thousands of government workers will stage on February 13 protest actions against mass layoffs, a government employees confederation said on Wednesday. "We are calling all employees nationwide to initiate participate or create any forms of actions signifying their resolute positions against layoff," labor group Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) said in a statement. Ferdinand Gaite, Courage president, said the mass actions will include employees from at least 23 government agencies. ***(INQUIRER.net)***

Arroyo fails to meet Obama

By JOEL GUINTO
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo failed to meet United States President Barack Obama when both leaders attended the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington D.C. on Thursday (late evening in Manila), her spokesperson said.

"There was no meeting. It was not on the agenda since it was a religious event," deputy presidential spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo told INQUIRER.net in a phone interview from Washington on Friday morning.

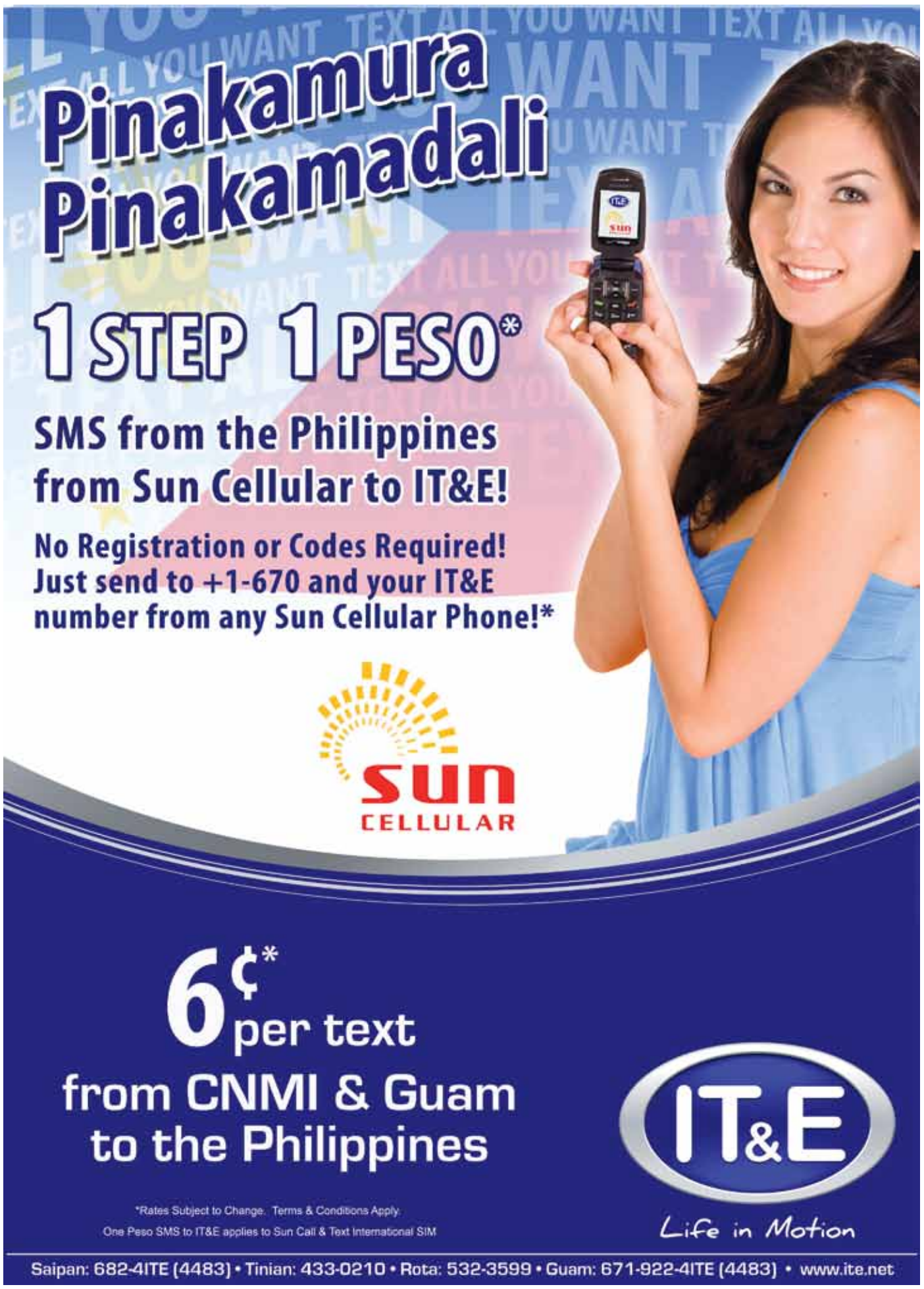
Obama left soon after his speech at the annual event because he had to rush to another engagement, Fajardo said.

"The President will meet with Senators to push for the Veterans' Bill and with potential investors," she said.

A meeting with the Filipino community in Washington was not on Arroyo's schedule, the spokesperson said.

The President and her party are expected back in Manila at 5 a.m. Sunday, she said.

Before the US trip, Arroyo was in Davos, Switzerland for the World Economic Forum, then proceeded to Milan, Italy; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and Manama, Bahrain to check on Filipino workers.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RP military poised to move on Abu Sayyaf

By JULIE ALIPALA, JOCELYN UY
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ZAMBOANGA CITY—It appears the military option will be used to rescue the three kidnapped aid workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Government troops and civilian volunteers Thursday were positioned around a barangay (village) in Indanan, Sulu, where the Abu Sayyaf kidnappers are believed to be holding their captives, according to a Philippine Daily Inquirer informant.

Also Thursday, Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan met with Maj. Gen. Juancho Sabban, the chief of Task Force Comet, and other local officials, according to the informant who asked not to be named for lack of authority to speak on the matter.

A number of personnel of the US Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines attended the brief closed-door meeting that started at 8 a.m., the informant said.

After the meeting, Sabban and some US soldiers left.

"Afterwards, we saw troops proceeding toward Barangay Lanagas near the area of Barangay Tubig Dacula," the informant said, adding:

"Such a movement of troops cannot happen if there's no approval from the governor."

According to a government worker in Indanan who spoke on condition of anonymity, the soldiers were "already waiting for an order to conduct a military operation in Tubig Dacula."

The barangay sits between the towns of Parang and Indanan and straddles three mountains—Bud Tumantangis, Bud Kapuk and Mount Taran. It is some 22 kilometers away from the Jolo town proper.

The informant said government troops had positioned themselves in Lanagas, which is adjacent to Tubig Dacula.

Social worker Christopher Lee said Tubig Dacula had long been abandoned by its residents.

"Bandits have infested the area," Lee said. "The residents fled because they were afraid to be caught in the crossfire every time there was a military operation."

First Lt. Esteffani Cacho, spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command, refused to comment on the military movement.

Neither would Senior Supt. Julasirim Kasim, the police chief of Sulu.

All Kasim would say was: "We are very, very busy today complying with the particular role given to us by the Task Force Comet pertaining to this ICRC case."

He also said police forces were being mobilized to secure all the major highways in Sulu and to fortify their forces in established choke points.

OUSTER CALL
Protesting students raise clenched fists as they face anti-riot police that prevented them from marching toward the presidential palace Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009 in Manila. The students called for the ouster of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and for a genuine social change to meet the current world economic crisis.

AP

Inflation hits 10-month low in January

By RONNEL DOMINGO, MICHELLE REMO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Inflation continued to slow down in January, with basic consumer prices rising an average of 7.1 percent year-on-year, thanks to a sustained drop in cost of fuel, electricity and water, the National Statistics Office reported Thursday.

Core inflation, which factors out volatile prices of selected food and energy items, was 6.9 percent in January, down from 7.3 percent in December.

The January overall inflation rate, down from 8.0 in February, continued a downtrend from a peak of 12.5 percent in August. It was the lowest in 10 months, since the 8.3 percent recorded in April.

The central bank, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), said that given the inflation data there was less hindrance for it to further ease monetary policy in the months ahead and support economic pump-priming.

The inflation report "confirms our expectation for a continued slowdown in price increases and gives the BSP more room to support the economy and ensure that there is sufficient liquidity for the efficient working of the financial markets," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

At the meeting of its policymaker Monetary Board last Jan. 29, the BSP slashed its key policy rates by another 0.50 percentage point. Its overnight borrowing and lending rates now stand 5.0 and 7.0 percent, respectively.

BSP officials are hoping the cut in the policy rates, one of the means to ease monetary policy, will encourage banks to lend more, instead of parking the funds at the central bank as deposits.

Despite the aggressive cut in policy rates, the BSP said it would not hesitate to ease monetary policy further if it deemed such a measure was needed to boost the economy, given a global slowdown.

The cost of fuel, light and water fell 3.8 percent year-on-year in January, after dropping 1.7 percent in December.

Food, beverages and tobacco prices rose 12.2 percent (easing from 12.7 percent in December); clothing, 4.3 percent; housing and repairs, 4.3 percent; services, 3.2 percent, and miscellaneous items, 3.6 percent.

$$$ PERSONAL FINANCE

A *job crisis survival guide*

By MA. SALVE DUPLITO
INQUIRER.NET

You could say preparing for extreme uncertainty now that corporate shutdowns and downsizing are escalating is already a bit late.

In a perfect world, we should have already drawn up clever financial escape hatches and different levels of fallback strategies to survive possible unemployment.

But it's also human nature to party while Noah-like characters build arks when the sun is shining. Unfortunately, the sun is gone and rain is falling. Official figures from the Department of Labor and Employment show that 19,000 Filipinos have already been retrenched and 34,000 have suffered from wage cuts as of Jan. 29. Hundreds more are losing their jobs every day, said Labor Secretary Marianito Roque.

Globally, the figures look even more alarming. The International Labor Organization expects the economic crunch to add 50 million people to the ranks of the unemployed this year.

If there is a time when losing your financial edge is a no-no, this is it. Losing a job doesn't just mean loss of a regular paycheck. It can also mean losing that health insurance you've never really appreciated before. It can mean giving up gas, clothing and representation allowances, not to mention your sense of self-worth and financial peace with your spouse.

Here's your survival guide for these lean months:

1. Know your rights. Companies have at their disposal many tricks to lower the cost of cutting jobs.

They can call it "retrenchment," instead of "redundancy" and save 50 percent in separation pay. Instead of getting one month for every year of service, you get only half a month if it's a retrenchment.

Don't forget, however, that membership in a union can entitle you to more than that so check with your union officers.

If you are being asked to stop work for no more than six months, the company doesn't have to pay a single peso in separation pay and all benefits are suspended. Then again, you have a job after six months, although you can never be sure until when the company will keep you after that.

Employees should have at least a month's notice before they are given the pink slip. "The labor department is given a copy of that notice so that the government and also the employees can initiate an inquiry on whether the company has competent proof that it really needs to lay off workers," says Quiambao.

Expect most companies to use the raging economic crisis as their reason for cutting jobs, but don't take their word for it. Under the law, before companies can send workers packing, they need to prove that they have done everything necessary to keep the company alive, like rotating workers in shifts and cutting costs. Companies also need to prove that losses are imminent, substantial and they need to back these up with audited financial statements.

If you find out that you've been given the boot due to the tough economic environment but the company hires someone else for a similar position, that's foul play. "That's invalid, and you can go after the company," says Carlo Cariño, senior partner at the Cariño and Mabalot Law Offices.

2. Keep your current job. We all sort of mildly get fed up with our jobs from time to time. It's called getting burned out. This year is not the time to let that feeling get the most of you. Don't be a good employee; be exceptional because being indispensable keeps your neck off the chopping block. It's easy to get lost in the daily to-do list, but the one thing that will keep you in the roster is if you understand what it takes for you to be a moneymaker for the company. That's always the bottom line. And whatever you do, never badmouth anyone. What if the last person you rat on becomes your boss after a merger, then where would you be?

3. Dust off that resumé and keep your contact list close. Hoping for the best but expecting the worst means you better get that resumé dusted off and updated. If your contact list is in your computer at the office, back it up and keep your own copy. Update it on your own time. Everybody talks about networking, but few people actually spend time doing it.

"Normally, you can get the best job offers through your family, friends, ex-lovers, everybody you know. Online job searches are great resources too," says Tabañag.

4. Feed that emergency fund like it's a voracious pet. Start tracking your spending and you'll find ways to save some pesos even if you think you're stretched already. Postpone big purchases or vacations and keep your priorities straight. Be very careful with swiping that credit card. Feeling depressed because of all the gloomy news can cause you to use plastic like a drug by buying stuff to feel good about yourself. Don't do it.

"If you go to the movies twice a week, perhaps do it once a month instead. If you are depressed and want to drink beer, remember that it costs P22 per bottle," Tabañag adds.

5. Stay covered with health insurance and don't wobble on insurance payments. These may seem like costs that you can do without in a down economy, but the truth is, you can't afford to not have a decent healthcare plan and protection from death and disability especially when the monthly paycheck has stopped. This early, find out from your human resource department if the company healthcare plan, which is normally cheaper and has better terms than individual plans, can be continued.

6. If you're having difficulty meeting loan payments, don't hide from your creditors. Or your children's school administrator who might be wondering why your check for tuition fee payments is bouncing. Being forthright with your financial situation can save money, because you just might persuade the bank not to turn over your account to a third-party collector. This is not always true, but there's no harm in trying.

7. Raise cash. Filipinos are great at earning money on the side, whether it's selling ready-to-wear clothing, food, or cookware. It's part of the culture; so if you haven't considered a sideline before, start thinking about a strategy now. Don't be shy. People need to buy stuff; why not buy them from you instead of the mall?

"There are many, many ways to start your own business with minimal or no capital at all, especially for services. You can fix computers if you're good at it, build a website, become a member of a good direct selling company. Those who have sizable goodbye money from their companies should think carefully about going into business instead of spending everything. A franchise, for example, is a good option," says Tabañag, who is also author of a new personal book, "12 Ways To Build Wealth On Any Income."

8. Clear your head and keep your emotions in check. Jitters can cause you to make mistakes. And whatever happens, remember that people are more important than things and that also means marriages are more important than paychecks. In the United States, divorce rates have gone down as couples find it's cheaper to stay together.

Maharlika – PinoyStyle

Zsazsa-Karylle duet in new album

By DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Zsazsa Padilla and Karylle did a duet of Natalie Cole's "I Live For Your Love" for K's soon-to-be-released album.

Love has taken its twists and turns in their lives. Through every heartbeat and heartache, Zsa and K have each other to turn to.

"After her split with Dong, I advised K to concentrate on love that is constant," said Zsa. "Love from her family and friends."

Do they fall in love the same way? "Like most women, we both give love our all and we don't hold back."

Does she prefer Jericho Rosales or Christian Bautista to be K's next boyfriend? "In all honesty, I would go for anyone she likes. I just want someone who has good intentions and won't break her heart."

Zsa's heart is in better shape than K for V-day. "It will be my 20th Valentine's with Dolphy. I hope he takes me to some place romantic like the beach. I appreciate our taking long trips just so we could be together. We can't stand being apart for a long time."

Zsa's luck in love will soon rub off on K. With or without Mr. Right, Zsa's love is all the love K has ever lost and hopes to find.

Zsazsa Padilla

Good work

Francis Pasion's "Jay," which opens today in all SM Cinemas, is the toast of film festivals abroad. It won the Grand Prize at the Asian Hotshots in Berlin and also bagged an award in a Venice film fest.

At the Cinema Evaluation Board, we were raving about the film and gave it an "A" rating. It delves into the subtle ways some media people exploit hapless souls who don't know any better all in the name of ratings.

"Jay" is thought-provoking as it is heartwarming. Lead actor Baron Geisler outdid himself in his portrayal of a gay TV producer who uses his power of persuasion to get his story. It's like Baron's "Robin Padilla" image off-cam suddenly transformed him into "Rustom Padilla (aka Bebe Gandanghari)" on-cam as Jay. "I'm not homophobic. I respect gays as long as they respect me. People say I'm vindicated because of Jay," Baron says. "Kasi despite the controversies hounding me, I got good reviews and won awards for my work in 'Jay.'"

Baron's good acting overpowers his so-called bad boy image.

Steady support

Mark Herras is backing up Jennylyn Mercado in her plan to file charges against a magazine that published unauthorized pictures of her baby Jazz's baptism. "Jen has her rights and so does her baby," Mark says. "As Jazz's ninong and her ex, I'm here with my silent yet steady support."

All that Jazz and fuss!

Testing the waters

Rufa Mae Quinto is dead set in trying her luck abroad. "I'll be leaving for the US after V-day, then I'll be back end of March," P-chi says. "Then in April I'll be off to Europe. I'll be home for my birthday concert on May, then fly naman ako to Canada. Will test the waters dun. Go international na muna ang beauty ko."

Watch out world! Here comes Pchi Pinay!

'Bromance'

I immensely enjoyed bonding with my two fave amigos Cesar Montano and Dingdong Dantes in Iloilo's hottest nightspot Flow Superclub. Since Buboy is a Kapamilya and Dong is a Kapuso, it's not everyday that they get to hang out together.

Baron Geisler

They both were surprised when I told them their birthdays fall on consecutive dates (Buboy on Aug. 1 and Dong on Aug. 2). No wonder they are alike in many ways. Kindness is a gift both of them were born with.

It was such a delight to hear them swap stories and compare notes. I cornered Dong about the real score between him and Marian Rivera. "Ayaw namin pareho ng commitment," Dong said. Then I asked Buboy, "When you were Dong's age, what were you up to?" He replied, "Girls lang nasa mind ko when I was his age." I countered "Not anymore?" Buboy shot back, "T-Th-S na lang ngayon!"

The three of us had a good laugh. From now on, I know that the Kapamilya superstar and the Kapuso heartthrob will be "magkakampi" and "magkaKAMPAI!"

Second time around

The love team of KC Concepcion and Richard Gutierrez is lovelier the second time around in Regal Entertainment and GMA Films' much awaited Valentine movie "When I Met You," which opens Feb. 11.

It's a mesmerizing movie about unexpected love that blossoms between two people who are fraught with the same complexities in their lives. KC portrays an unpretentious mall promodizer and Richard, a struggling cargo pilot. An unlikely romance begins when their plane crashes in an unknown island.

Three acting awards for screen legend

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Calling from her home in Alabang, screen legend Anita Linda couldn't contain her excitement upon learning that she won Best Actress for "Adela" from the Young Critics Circle— her third citation, after the Cinemanila and Gawad Tanglaw, for the same film.

"I never expected that 'Adela' would make all these beautiful things possible, for me and for the rest of the cast and crew."

She is especially thrilled for director Adolfo Alix Jr. because "Adela" topped all the categories at the YCC.

"It's a wonderful life," she said. "God knows that all I want to do in my remaining years is to continue acting." Jokingly, she added: "I'm proud that at my age producers still hire me for movies and TV shows."

Anita turned 84 last Nov. 23.

Apart from the ABS-CBN soap opera "Tayong Dalawa," she is starring in two independent films: Joven Tan's "Booking" with Emilio Garcia and Snooky Serna; and Mao Clarin Sy's "Amamanhig" with Alfred Vargas.

In "Booking," she said, "I play a grandmother who's pimping her own flesh and blood. I couldn't bear to utter some of the risqué lines, but I had to."

In "Amamanhig," a period thriller set in 1927, she also struggled with long lines in poetic Tagalog. She said it was like going back to the set of a Gerry de Leon movie.

On "Tayong Dalawa," she has to deliver Chinese words. "All I ask is to get the script in advance so I can memorize my lines. I love acting because it keeps my mind sharp."

She put her quick thinking to good use recently when the cab she was riding was held up along Edsa. Anita recalled: "We were stuck in traffic. The robber tried to open the door; I pulled it back and locked it."

Poor robber didn't stand a chance. Anita was an action star in her days at Premiere Productions.

'Bad boy' Billy falls for nice gal Nikki

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—It'll be a hectic 2009 for international pop star Billy Crawford who will be jetting in and out of the country for a tour with Sarah Geronimo in the U.S., and with Akon and Neo all over the globe.

With all this plane-hopping, how will he find the time for his new sweetheart, singer-actress and "ASAP" and "Your Song" co-star Nikki Gil?

The answer is time management, says Billy.

Apart from his love life, Billy also has to nurture his relationship with his two dads—biological father Jack Crawford, who's recovering from throat cancer; and show biz discoverer German Moreno, who has finally forgiven him for moving to ABS-CBN.

How's your relationship with Nikki?

We're happy. We are on the same page. It's like we are writing a book, toward a relationship. But we are busy with other things, too.

How do you make sure you have time for each other?

We make time. We're not together every day, but we have special ways of communicating.

Texting, e-mail, Facebook?

I'm not fond of texting. I'd rather call. If she's not picking up, then I know she's busy with school or work.

How do you propose to sustain your relationship when you go abroad next month?

Number one is communication. Whatever your relationship is—whether it's friendly or romantic—you have to work to keep it strong. Communication and trust are the secrets. We both love talking on the phone.

What are Nikki's endearing traits?

Billy Crawford at the inaugural Filipino American Visionary Awards at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, CA. The event took place on Friday, March 7, 2008. STHANLEE B. MIRADOR

She's an angel... she's a saint, actually. She's a big blessing in my life.

As opposed to you?

No naman. I'm not the devil.

You played a possessed boy in "The Exorcist."

Hahaha! Like me, Nikki's hardworking. But unlike me, she's smart. Well, she's book-smart; I'm street-smart. Another thing we share is that we value family.

How's your dad?

He's getting better. Luckily, his throat cancer was just in its early stage. He had an operation and is now back in the US for further tests.

How has your dad's illness changed your relationship with him?

My dad and I never had a major quarrel. As in other families, we've had little misunderstandings, but I always knew that he's just trying to protect me. He has always been supportive and accepting. When I found out he was sick, I got sad. But I have to be strong for him.

How are you and Kuya Germs?

We had dinner recently. We're OK now. I always worry about his health, too. But he seemed healthy the last time we talked. I'm just glad that our little [tiff] is over. He has forgiven me and all is well. It's a great way to start the new year.

Maharlika – Opinyon

EDITORIAL

The right to complain

Editorial writers and columnists have been complaining lately about the lack of moral outrage over what's happening in the country. But last week, something happened that may yet give us hope that the people are beginning to act and to demand better governance and better service from our government officials.

More than 1,000 people in Eastern Samar province, disgusted by the worsening condition of highways in the province, signed a petition demanding the immediate repair of badly damaged roads. In a letter, the petitioners said: "We say enough! No more excuses. Repair and rehabilitate our roads now."

Municipal Trial Court Judge Rowena Tan of Balangiga town, who drafted the petition, said, "The hell roads of Eastern Samar are an eloquent testimony to the selfishness, callousness and insensitivity of our local and national officials."

Billions of pesos are being allocated for construction and repair of roads and highways, but why are national highways such as those in Eastern Samar in such a deplorable state of disrepair? One reason is corruption. Contractors scrimp on some materials such as cement and gravel or asphalt so that they can make some profit after giving 20, 30 or perhaps even 40 percent of the project cost as kickback to certain national and local officials. Another reason is that provincial roads are not given enough attention because they are far from Imperial Manila and the critical eyes of the media.

The "rising" of 1,000 people in Eastern Samar gives us hope that Filipinos will no longer remain silent, clenching their fists and gnashing their teeth in helpless anger over the many bad things that are happening in their country. What is needed for evil to triumph over good is for good people to stay silent and do nothing about the evil things that powerful people are doing, or not to complain about the non-action of government officials on their urgent problems.

In a democracy such as the Philippines, the people have the right to peaceably assemble and ask the government for redress of their grievances. They have the right to complain about deficiencies in services and facilities; they are paying for these things with their taxes. They have the right to demand good service from government officials, from the President down to the last town councilor; their taxes pay for the salaries of these public servants.

The people have the right—and the obligation—to complain about, denounce and demand action on cases of corruption. Corrupt government officials steal the money of the people, money that should be used to provide the people with better services and facilities.

The people are getting fed up and they are doing something about the bad state of affairs in their communities, towns and provinces. The "rising" need not begin and end in Eastern Samar. It is high time the people expressed their moral outrage over the deplorable situation that is obtaining and the bad things that are happening in their country. Time to reprise Corazon Aquino's "Tama na, sobra na!" [Enough already, too much already!]

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Recession

There's The Rub

By CONRADO DE QUIROS

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Put it to KSP, or "kulang sa pansin" [lacking in attention]. However Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has tried to get an audience with Barack Obama or catch his attention, he has ignored her. Or, since ignored suggests an active response, he has gone about as though she does not exist. Hence the fighting words at Davos, calculated to give the new US president a rise by being needled by a voice from the wilderness.

"What we want is for America to do something because the last thing we want is for America to do nothing. You may be vague on what should be done, but the worst thing is for it not to do anything…. Filipinos love America and what we can say is that it's so easy to have 20/20 vision in hindsight when all this easy money policy was going. [It was] very good for the world, everybody's GDP and our GNP because we had a lot of remittances coming from America. It was all fine. Then the bubble burst, but did we all know that the bubble was getting to be so big?"

She went on to say that people like her should be given a say in managing the world economy.

It's taking to absurd lengths Eduardo Ermita's proposition that Obama has much to learn from Arroyo. At the very least the presumption lies in Arroyo projecting herself as one of the recognized leaders of the developing countries when she isn't even the recognized leader of her unraveling country. Had the event taken place before May 2004, she might have been accorded the kind of welcome the new Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva was given, as a leader heroically emerged from the loins of People Power. It has not, and the world has no patience listening to impostors.

At the very most, the monumental irony of it is that what she told the world is in fact what she should be telling her country. Or somebody ought to: "What we want is for the people to do something because the last thing we want is for the people to do nothing. You may be vague on who you want to replace Aroyo but the worst thing is for you to do nothing. Filipinos love freedom and what we can say is that it's so easy to have 20/20 vision in hindsight. All that hope and euphoria from the EDSA People Power II made her possible. It was good for everyone, rich and poor, because we had a lot of expectations from her. It was all fine. But from the start, the bubble burst. How in hell did we know that bubble was going to get so big?"

Nobody in Davos of course will mind her utterances, least of all the new American president. But if Obama had a mind to say anything, he might say, "But I've already done something to reverse the recession. You'll find it in that part of my speech where I said, 'To those who cling to power through corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, know that you are on the wrong side of history.'"

That is not being facetious. That is being perfectly serious. It hits the nail right on the head. What precipitated the US recession, if they were not indeed the root causes of it, were two things.

One was the epically tyrannical rule of George W. Bush, with its war cry of "death to terror," which tolerated everything except dissent, including spending $80 billion on Iraq alone. By the time Bush left, he had reversed the financial surpluses during Bill Clinton's time to an eye-popping half-trillion dollars. Today, "war on terror" has ceased to gain currency, in all senses of that word, in Obama's Washington.

The second was the equally epic corruption of Wall Street, as both John McCain and Obama harped on during the campaign—McCain especially, vowing to punish the wicked when he came to power. He was forced to vote for the bailout package anyway, which remained kind to those who had caused the spectacular collapse of the world's thereto most impregnable financial institution. What had caused the corruption itself was the lack of transparency, the doings in Wall Street being as opaque as those behind the Iron Curtain.

The lesson is clear: What caused the recession was the receding of democratic values. What caused the recession were the corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent. Guess who most embodies corruption and deceit and the silencing of dissent, quite apart from clinging to power, elsewhere in the world.

The lesson is just as clear: The answer to recession is not any of the gobbledygook Arroyo has mouthed in Davos, or any of the gobbledygook far more serious, and acknowledged, world leaders have mouthed in Davos; it is the stopping of corruption and deceit and restoring the people's faith in their governments. The answer to the receding of democratic values is the restoring of democratic values. The specifically economic solutions mean nothing without them.

There is nothing vague about Obama's answer to the economic crisis besetting his time and his world, even if Arroyo's mind is unable to wrap itself around the concept of honesty and transparency. It was the same answer Franklin Delano Roosevelt gave to the crisis besetting his time and his world:

"What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them—that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long no longer apply. The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works—whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified. Where the answer is yes, we intend to move forward. Where the answer is no, programs will end. And those of us who manage the public's dollars will be held to account—to spend wisely, reform bad habits, and do our business in the light of day—because only then can we restore the vital trust between a people and their government."

Bring Arroyo to have a say in the managing of the world economy? The world economy had better bolt everything to the floor.

Interplay of myth and history

Looking Back

By AMBETH OCAMPO

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

The central hall of the National Gallery of Art used to be dominated by Juan Luna's impressive and very depressing painting "Spoliarium." It shows a dead gladiator being dragged out of the coliseum, like a slab of meat in a market, while a woman weeps in a corner. We sympathize with the woman who can be a wife, sister, or lover.

From childhood we were taught that this huge painting was an allegory of Spanish oppression. Sometimes it is even suggested that the crying lady is actually Filipinas. Maybe I lack imagination, but I fail to see what other people see in this historical painting. It is just a scene from ancient Rome. How can the same painting depict Ninoy Aquino on the tarmac of the Manila International Airport in 1983? Like an ink-blot test, sometimes we see what we want to see in a picture.

If you visit the National Gallery today, you will find another large painting to engage both eye and imagination. For those bored with the overexposed, over-discussed "Spoliarium," there is Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo's "The Assassination of Governor General Bustamante." This is probably the painter's largest extant work, but it is not well known because it was so controversial that it remained hidden for the better part of the last century. The painting depicts friars murdering Bustamante in the 18th century. Some sources claim that the original title given by the artist was "La Iglesia contra el estado" (The Church against the State), but he changed his mind and the painting has since been known as "The Assassination of Governor General Bustamante."

Rolled up and kept in storage, it was only shown publicly in 1974 in the National Museum, then in the Metropolitan Museum of Manila in 1989, and now, thanks to the family of the late National Artist Leandro V. Locsin, this work is permanently shared with the public.

Fernando Amorsolo made his version of this painting, and it seems that the Bustamante story spawned other narratives and other meanings. One of the Bustamante-related stories is "La Loba Negra" (The Black She-Wolf), a work attributed to Fr. Jose Burgos based on a manuscript that was last seen in the collection of the late Luis Ma. Araneta. "La Loba Negra" was published before World War II and an offset reprint of the "original" manuscript was published by Roberto Martinez and Sons after the war. It was translated from the original Spanish by the ex-Jesuit Fr. Hilario Lim.

Aside from this novel, other Burgos manuscripts surfaced in the 1960s covering many different branches of knowledge. These papers made Burgos rival Jose Rizal as the most brilliant and prolific of our national heroes.

Some scholars were not swayed. Those who read the original "La Loba Negra" had their doubts: The Spanish was so bad that there were many inconsistencies in what was supposedly a historical text to which Burgos had firsthand knowledge through primary sources. Yet the plot of the novel is intriguing: La Loba Negra was a woman who was murdering friars in the dead of the night. She was not a psycho, nor was she a rape victim, but revenge was her motive. La Loba Negra was the avenging widow of Bustamante.

So moving, so powerful is the storyline that it has inspired more contemporary works, the most important being a play by Virginia R. Moreno titled "Onyx Wolf." It won third prize in the 1969-1970 literary contest of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Even before the play was first published in 1980, even before it was staged in 1971, Onyx Wolf was made into a landmark ballet by Alice Reyes known as "Itim Asu."

What made me remember Hidalgo, Bustamante and Burgos today is the fact that "La Loba Negra" is a forgery. It was not written by Burgos, but is the handiwork of Jose E. Marco, an antique dealer from Bacolod City who was exposed for selling fake stamps. Later it was discovered that he peddled more interesting things: manuscripts supposedly by Burgos and another that gave us another mythical figure in history, Datu Kalantiaw.

Marco is a fascinating footnote in our history who has been maligned since 1968 when he was exposed as the forger of the Povedano manuscript of 1572, a text from which was born the Code of Kalantiaw supposedly promulgated in 1433 in Aklan, thus antedating the arrival of Magellan and proving to everyone the glories of pre-Spanish Philippine culture. That Marco has been credited with "La Loba Negra" and other works by Burgos is one thing, but because he had a long career that spanned half a century, his work has to be revisited not so much as forgeries but to understand what kind of problems misplaced nationalism can bring.

The late Rene Villanueva wrote a play about Marco and Kalantiaw and projected him as a historical villain. If I could write my own play, I would make Marco a more complex character who speaks of our own aspirations and our own fears. Confronted by an angry young historian (based on myself, of course), Marco would calmly say, "You wanted a pre-Spanish civilization. You had none. So I created one for you. You wanted a novel by Burgos. You had none. So I created one for you. If you want to be proud of your history then even if these manuscripts are forgeries, you just have to believe them." This would make me less of a historian, but then the interplay of myth and history has always fascinated me and Marco is one way to study it.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu.

Samu't Sari

INSTALLATION DINNER FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Mason officers listen as Guam International Airport Authority property manager Alfredo D. Leon Guerrero delivers his speech during the installation of Mason officers.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, extreme right, served as the guest speaker at the inauguration of the Mason officers last week. Also in the photo from Fitial's right are Danny E. Banez, Clifton Claybrooks, and Alfredo Leon Guerrero.

FOURTH BIRTHDAY REY BELGADO

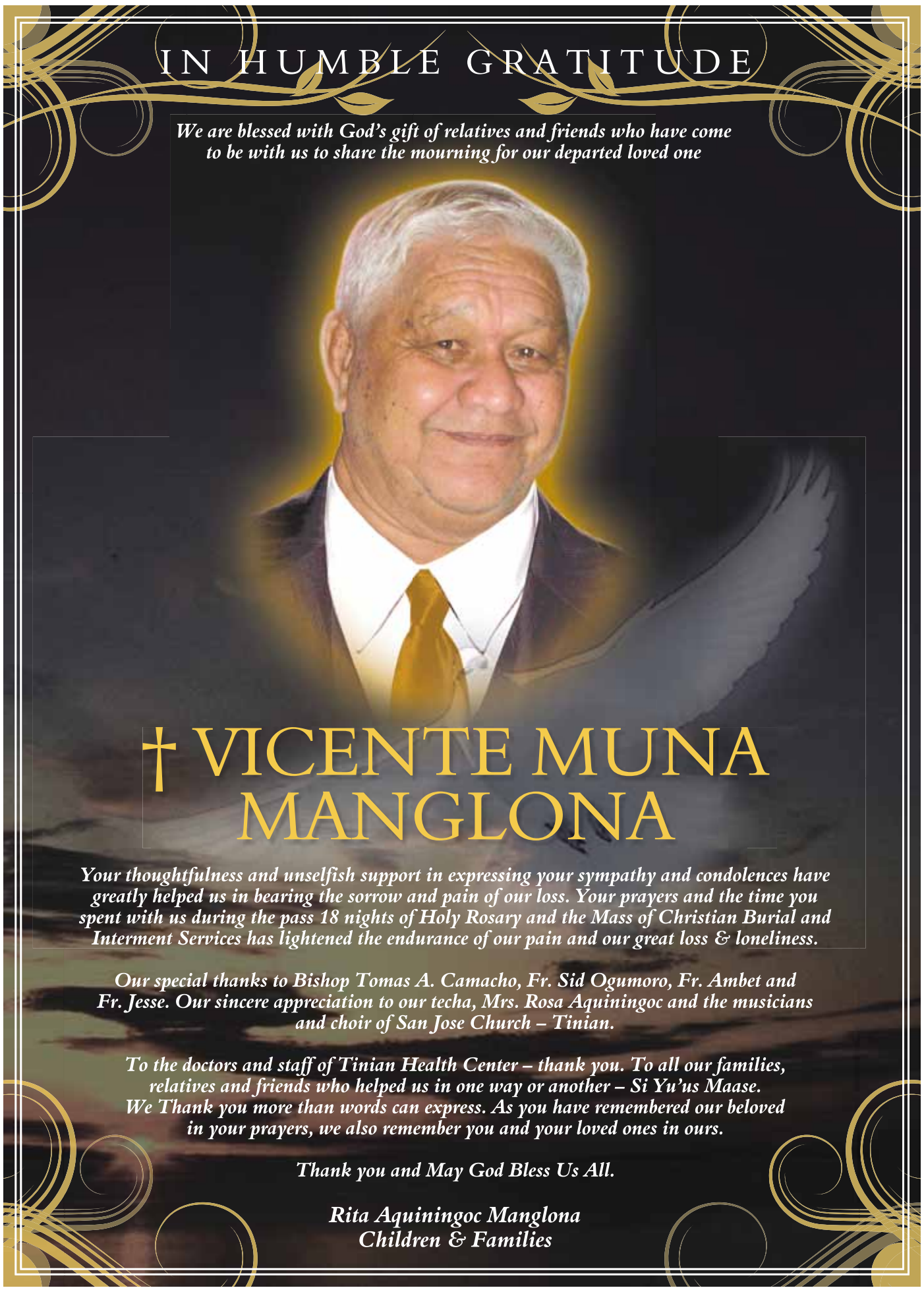
Ralph and Joy Yumul have their picture taken with the birthday celebrant, son Railee Yumul, who celebrated his fourth birthday on Feb. 5, 2009, at the Jollibee Garapan branch.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ren-Ren and Ayana Nunez bond during lunch at the Saipan World Resort on Jan. 20, 2009.

BIRTHDAY SHOUT-OUT CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Belated happy 7th birthday to Claire de la Cruz, who celebrated her birthday last Jan. 28, 2009, at her residence in Asia Garden, Chalan Laulau, Saipan. Greetings from her Mommy Bebeth.


IN HUMBLE GRATITUDE
We are blessed with God's gift of relatives and friends who have come to be with us to share the mourning for our departed loved one
† VICENTE MUNA MANGLONA
Your thoughtfulness and unselfish support in expressing your sympathy and condolences have greatly helped us in bearing the sorrow and pain of our loss. Your prayers and the time you spent with us during the pass 18 nights of Holy Rosary and the Mass of Christian Burial and Interment Services has lightened the endurance of our pain and our great loss & loneliness.
Our special thanks to Bishop Tomas A. Camacho, Fr. Sid Ogumoro, Fr. Ambet and Fr. Jesse. Our sincere appreciation to our techa, Mrs. Rosa Aquiningoc and the musicians and choir of San Jose Church – Tinian.
To the doctors and staff of Tinian Health Center – thank you. To all our families, relatives and friends who helped us in one way or another – Si Yu'us Maase. We Thank you more than words can express. As you have remembered our beloved in your prayers, we also remember you and your loved ones in ours.
Thank you and May God Bless Us All.
Rita Aquiningoc Manglona
Children & Families

Young Style

Best picture book? Ask the kids

By VALERIE STRAUSS
(c) 2009, The Washington Post

If you look on the shelves at your house or school, there are sure to be books that have won the Caldecott or Newbery medal.

These awards are given each year to the books that a group of librarians decides are the best of the year for kids. The Caldecott is given to a picture book for youngsters. (Remember "Where the Wild Things Are"?) And the Newbery goes to a work of literature for older kids. (Think "Holes" and "The Giver.")

The 2009 medals were given out last week: the Newbery to "The Graveyard Book" by popular novelist Neil Gaiman, and the Caldecott to "The House in the Night," illustrated by Beth Krommes and written by Susan Marie Swanson.

You might not stop to think about how the winners are selected. But a bunch of Arlington, Va., kids decided to see exactly how it was done—by doing it themselves!

Each week for several months, groups of fifth-graders at 12 public schools took time—often skipping lunch and recess—to carefully evaluate picture books and vote on their favorites.

"It's fun to look through the books and act like the real Caldecott committee," said Allison Herrity, 10, of Long Branch Elementary School.

More than 110 kids spent hours reading books picked by Kristi Jemtegaard, the coordinator of youth services for the Arlington Public Library. She chose books that she thought had a chance of winning the real Caldecott.

"I told them that their choices were as real as the real Caldecott committee, and the children became very invested in their choices," she said.

Here is how the voting went — with each school having one vote — for the winning picture book:
Bear's Picture
"Bear's Picture" written by Daniel Pinkwater, illustrated by D.B. Johnson
COUPLE OF BOYS HAVE THE BEST WEEK EVER
MARLA FRAZEE
"A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever"* by Marla Frazee
ALL ABOARD!
"All Aboard!" concept by Chris L. Demarest, illustrated by Bill Mayer
Pale Male
"Pale Male: Citizen Hawk of New York City" written by Janet Schulman, illustrated by Meilo So
ONE BOY
LAURA VACCARO SEEGER
"One Boy" by Laura Vaccaro Seeger
SILENT MUSIC
"Silent Music" by James Rumford
* Selected as a Caldecott Honor Book by the official committee.
THE WASHINGTON POST

THE WASHINGTON POST

A group of Arlington, Va., fifth-graders didn't choose same picture book winner as the Caldecott medal committee did. The students' top picks were "Bear's Picture" and "A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever."

How the kids voted

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Each Arlington, Va., school was given one vote for the winning picture book. Here are the results:

Three Votes

"Bear's Picture," written by Daniel Pinkwater, illustrated by D.B. Johnson

"A Couple of Boys Have the Best Week Ever," by Marla Frazee (this book was selected as a Caldecott Honor Book by the official committee)

Two Votes

"All Aboard!," concept by Chris L. Demarest, illustrated by Bill Mayer

One Vote

"Pale Male: Citizen Hawk of New York City," written by Janet Schulman, illustrated by Meilo So

"One Boy," by Laura Vaccaro Seeger

"Silent Music," by James Rumford

The kids learned, with help from librarians, all the things to consider when evaluating a book.

For a picture book, it's not just the pictures. The overall design of the book matters, as do the words, if there are any.

At Long Branch during one recent Caldecott session, the kids paid careful attention to the dark pictures and the story they were telling in a book called "Steel Town," by Jonah Winter, about an imaginary town just like the American steel towns of the 1930s.

Pointing to a drawing that showed a hot dog on sale for a nickel, 10-year-old Caeley Niess said, "You can kind of tell it was from long ago because you can't get a hot dog for 5 cents."

After reviewing more than 15 books, kids at 11 of the 12 schools chose their favorite. As it turned out, none of them selected "The House in the Night" as the best book (though two schools picked it as a runner-up).

Does it really matter that the kids' Caldecott committee and the real Caldecott committee picked different winners? Librarian Jemtegaard doesn't think so.

"The goal is to get good books into the hands of children," she said. "Anything that does that is a good thing."

CALDECOTT FACT

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

WASHINGTON—The Caldecott Medal was named for 19th-century English illustrator Randolph Caldecott. The first one was given in 1938, to "Animals of the Bible, a Picture Book." Two years later, the famous "Madeline" was a runner-up.

Show-no-mercy team didn't really win

By FRED BOWEN
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

Two girls' high school basketball teams played a game last month that was not as close and exciting as Sunday's Super Bowl.

The Covenant School, a private school in Dallas, defeated Dallas Academy, 100-0. That's right, 100-0.

The newspaper accounts indicated Covenant led 59-0 at halftime. At least one fan who attended the game said the Covenant team kept pressuring their opponents and shooting three-pointers until just a few minutes remained in the game. The Covenant fans and even their coaches cheered until their team reached the 100-point mark.

To their credit, the girls from Dallas Academy did not give up. They kept playing hard but could only manage a few shots at the basket. Dallas Academy is a small school that specializes in helping kids with learning disabilities. Their girls' basketball team has not won a game in four seasons.

The score was so lopsided that the headmaster of the Covenant School, Kyle Queal, apologized later, saying, "It is shameful and an embarrassment that this happened." Covenant even tried to forfeit the game, saying, "A victory without honor is a great loss."

But the Covenant coach, Micah Grimes, would not apologize. Grimes said, "We played the game as it was meant to be played." So the Covenant School fired Grimes.

It seems to me that the Covenant coach and some of the team's fans forgot that the real test of an athlete or a team is not how they perform against the weakest opponents, but how they perform against the best.

John Wooden, whose UCLA teams won a record 10 NCAA championships, said that the true indication of competitive greatness was to "be at your best when your best is needed."

Every year there are games in kids' recreational or school sports where the teams are so unevenly matched that one team crushes the other. As a longtime coach, I never felt right telling my team not to score. After all, a blowout game may give a kid who never scores the chance to put one in the basket. And everyone likes to score.

But in lopsided kids' games, there always should be a "mercy rule." For example, in high school basketball, if one team is ahead by 40 points, the game should be over and the leading team should be declared the winner.

A mercy rule would encourage the coach of the better team to put in the bench warmers earlier in the game and to order the team to pass more or to stop pressing.

Kids' sports should be competitive and fun. And I'll admit winning is part of the fun. But beating a badly overmatched team by 100 points is not a real win.

Bowen is an author of sports novels for kids.

SPORTS FACT

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

One of the biggest blowouts in professional sports history was on Dec. 8, 1940, when the Chicago Bears whipped the Washington Redskins, 73-0.

Why are there more kinds of dogs than cats?

By VALERIE STRAUSS
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

Have you ever wondered why there are more kinds of dogs than cats?

First off, let's define what we mean by "kinds." There are animals that are purebred and ones that are mixed breeds. A breed is a group of related dogs or cats with similar characteristics. Humans maintain animal breeds over generations by making sure that only animals of a given breed mate with one another.

"Purebred" means that an animal comes from two parents of the same breed and has the traits of its parents. Some dog breeders consider a dog a member of a breed only if both parents are entirely of the same breed. But others allow a dog to be only 75 percent "purebred" to be considered part of the breed.

As a result, how many breeds there are depends on whom you ask. For example, the World Canine Organization, based in Belgium, recognizes nearly 400 dog breeds around the world. But the American Kennel Club, which started in 1884 with nine dog breeds on its registry, now recognizes 161 breeds.

In the United States, the most popular breeds have long included Labrador retrievers, golden retrievers, German shepherds, dachshunds and beagles.

"Designer dogs," the result of putting two completely different breeds together, have become popular in recent years. This is often done to create animals that do not shed. The result is a different kind of dog, but not a new breed.

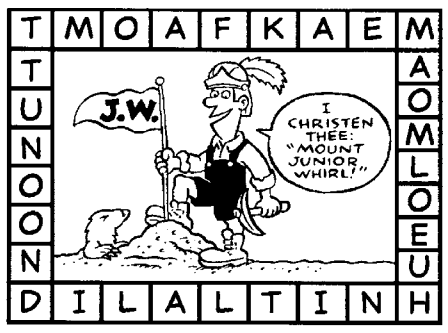
Now let's talk about cats, where there is the same kind of disagreement over breed. The International Cat Association recognizes 54 breeds of cats. But the Cat Fanciers' Association recognizes 40.

So why are there more breeds of dogs than cats? One big reason is that dogs have been bred to do different things, such as hunting, guarding and herding. Cats have not.

Persian and Siamese cats remain among the most popular breeds. But a new addition to the feline world are "designer cats"—animals bred for a particular market.

One of the best-known designer cats is called an Ashera, a mix of an African serval, an Asian leopard cat and a specific kind of domestic cat. The result is a cat that looks like a small leopard—and costs between $22,000 and $125,000!

Sources: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County; American Kennel Club; Dog Breed Info Center; International Cat Association; Lifestyle Pets



A MOMENTOUS MOMENT IN HISTORY! Hidden in the above frame is a famous old saying. You can find it by reading every other letter as you go around it clockwise. The trick is finding the right first letter.

Answer: Starting with the letter "D" in the lower lefthand corner: "Don't make a mountain out of a molehill."

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

Illustrated by David Coulson

HE'S IN THE MONEY!
In this type of puzzle you are given a word that must be changed into another word in a series of moves. During each move, you must change one letter in the previous word so as to form a new word. In our example, we changed HAVE to LEND in four moves. See if you can change the following five words in four moves.

1. FIRE to SOOT
2. BAKE to ROLL
3. LIMP to RACE
4. DRUM to BEAT
5. BULL to COWS

Answers:
1. FIRE, SIRE, SORE, SORT, SOOT.
2. BAKE, BALE, BALL, BOLL, ROLL.
3. LIMP, LAMP, LAME, LACE, RACE.
4. DRUM, DRAM, DRAT (mild oath), BRAT, BEAT.
5. BULL, BOLL, BOWL, BOWS, COWS.

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SEE IF YOU CAN make this math expression correct by adding five minus signs and one plus sign between certain numbers on the left side.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 = 100

Answer: 123 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 + 8 - 9 = 100

FIND THE SEVEN WORDS PUZZLE! In the word square at the right, we've removed six of the letters to spell out the word "PATENT." See if you can replace these letters in the squares so that you will have four three-letter words across and three four-letter words down. The time limit is 60 seconds.

P	M	A	
A		L	
T	I		S
E		O	
N			
T			

Answers: (Across): Map, ale, its, not. (Down): Main, alto, pest.

Smiling borzoi is not alone

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: After reading your article about the "smiling" Borzoi, I want to tell you about my smiling Border Collie. "Jamie" will walk up to me with bared teeth, looking for a pat or a backrub. A smile and a head shake tells me she wants to go outside. There also is the "hangdog" look with bared teeth when she knows she has been naughty. No growls, just smiles.

Sometimes when I call her to come inside she looks at me, smiles and trots in the other direction! I wish I could read her mind. Jamie is such a quick study. Smartest dog we have ever adopted.—Carol F., Conesus, N.Y.

DEAR CAROL: Thank you for sharing that! Jamie sounds like a real character, all right.

A dog's "smile" often indicates submissiveness, and certain breeds like the Borzoi actually bare their teeth when they smile. This is fairly uncommon in most other dogs -- if you're not familiar with a dog that is baring its teeth, back away.

Still, Border Collies are indeed very smart dogs and quick studies. They also just have that bright, alert, happy attitude that is the mark of a healthy Collie. I have a feeling that Jamie figured out that whenever she "smiles," she gets a positive response from you (a backrub, or a trip outside, or another treat). Either way, it's definitely a good deal on both sides, as you know when Jamie wants something (and can read signals as to what exactly she wants), and Jamie knows how to ask!

■ ■ ■

Send your tips, questions and comments to Paw's Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or e-mail them to pawscorner@hotmail.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

■ It is recorded in historical notes of the 19th century that the Reverend Francis Henry Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater, made a habit during the last years of his life of sitting down to a formal dinner every evening with a dozen guests. This might not seem odd until you learn that the guests were all canines, seated in armchairs and with napkins tied around their necks.

■ It was French military leader Napoleon Bonaparte who made the following sage observation: "In politics, absurdity is not a handicap."

■ After his death in 2005, the ashes of Hunter S. Thompson, pioneer of gonzo journalism and author of the infamous novel "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas," were fired spaceward from a giant cannon to the accompaniment of fireworks and the Bob Dylan song "Mr. Tambourine Man."

■ It's been reported that the average lifespan of a tree in the metropolis of New York City is only seven years.

■ Evidently, it's not just humans who associate a deeper voice with maturity (and desirability) in males. It seems that male owls try to appear more macho and attract females by lowering the tone of their hoots.

■ Every year an organization known as the Diagram Group awards a prize to the person who submits the strangest title of an actual book that was published in that year. Here's a sampling of previous winners: "Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Nude Mice," "The Theory of Lengthwise Rolling," "High-Performance Stiffened Structures," "Living With Crazy Buttocks," "Greek Rural Postmen and Their Cancellation Numbers" and "Butterworths Corporate Manslaughter Service."

■ Records show that in England in 1552, William Shakespeare's father had to pay a fine for littering.

■ ■ ■

Thought for the Day: "Failure is not the only punishment for laziness; there is also the success of others."—Jules Renard

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MAGIC MAZE ● PISTOLS

A	I	G	D	B	Y	W	T	R	P	M	K	I	F	D
B	T	T	Y	N	W	G	U	S	Q	O	M	K	I	F
D	B	T	R	X	O	M	N	U	G	D	N	A	H	L
Z	X	W	E	O	O	S	U	I	U	S	R	Q	O	A
N	L	J	V	R	H	B	S	N	N	U	H	F	K	I
D	C	A	O	Y	E	S	R	E	G	W	W	C	V	C
5	4	T	L	O	C	B	2	E	W	A	O	T	S	E
Q	P	N	V	L	K	I	R	2	P	L	M	R	H	P
M	R	A	E	R	I	F	F	E	G	P	C	7	B	S
B	M	Z	R	E	K	A	M	E	C	A	E	P	5	8
Y	W	9	R	E	G	N	I	R	R	E	D	P	V	3

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

.22 short	Beretta	Firearm	Pepper-box
.357 magnum	Browning	Glock	Revolver
.38 special	Colt 45	Handgun	Ruger
9 mm	Derringer	Peacemaker	

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	–		x		7
÷		x		–	
	x		+		14
+		–		x	
	–		x		10
11		26		25	

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 8 9

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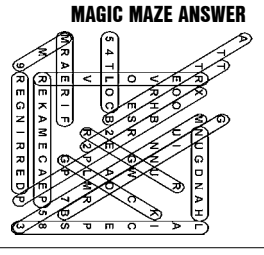
MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



GO FIGURE ANSWER

	25		26		11
10	5	x	6	–	8
	x		–		+
14	2	+	4	x	3
	–		x		÷
7	7	x	8	–	9

Heart-y family living for Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is just around the corner, and while thoughts naturally turn to heart-shaped candies and cards, it's an ideal time to nudge one another to take a closer look at how we care for our hearts.

Kathy Kamrowski, spokeswoman for the Nasseff Heart Center of United Hospital in St. Paul, Minn., energizes hospital employees as well as people in the community to live heart-healthy lives during February, which is American Heart Month. Here are a few of her suggestions for a heart-healthy lifestyle:

■ Know your ABC's. A: avoid tobacco; B: be more active; C: choose good nutrition.

■ Exercise together. Regular exercise improves your circulation. Take a walk with your family after dinner tonight.

■ Try some healthier cooking techniques: stir-fry, microwave, roast, grill, broil, bake, poach, sauté and steam.

■ Reduce stress. When you're feeling stressed, ask yourself, "Will this matter a year from now?" And a good laugh can increase blood flow and relax the lining of blood vessel walls.

If reducing stress is your biggest challenge, take a break and have a laugh while you enjoy this relaxing activity with your family. Make beautiful heart-shaped suncatchers out of ice to hang from a tree branch on a cold day. If you live in a warm climate, place an edible version in a punch bowl for a Valentine's Day party with friends.

Here's what you'll need:

■ A heart-shaped cake or small cupcake pan with a rim, or the base of a heart-shaped candy box lined with aluminum foil so water can't seep through

■ Dried flowers, leaves and rose petals for suncatcher

■ Decorative edible items such as thinly sliced oranges, limes and strawberries

■ Strong string or wire for a hanger

■ Water

Here's the fun:

Set some decorative items into the pan or lined box. (For punch-bowl ice, add edible items only.)

Set a portion of a 20-inch length of twine or wire in the water, making sure it is submerged near the top center of the heart. Fill with water and set in the freezer.

When the temperature outside is freezing, remove the heart from the pan and hang from a branch where a glimmer of sunlight will shine through.

■ ■ ■

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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Life & Style

Miley Cyrus embroiled in another photo controversy

In this Jan. 11, 2009 file photo, Miley Cyrus arrives at the 66th Annual Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif.
AP

NEW YORK (AP)—Miley Cyrus is responding to criticism that she mocked Asians in a photograph of the tween star stretching the corners of her eyes.

"In NO way was I making fun of any ethnicity!" Cyrus wrote Thursday in a posting on her official Web site. "I was simply making a goofy face. When did that become newsworthy? It seems someone is trying to make something out of nothing to me."

The photo, making the rounds online, shows the "Hannah Montana" star and five friends squinting their eyes into a slanted expression. An Asian man sits next to Cyrus, not participating in the group pose.

The OCA, a group dedicated to advancing the social, political and economic well being of Asian Pacific Americans, criticized the 16-year-old star this week for setting "a terrible example for her many young fans" by "mocking and denigrating individuals of Asian descent."

In a statement, OCA executive director George Wu said the group hopes Cyrus will apologize to her fans.

"Well, (I'm) sorry if those people looked at those pics and took them wrong and out of context!" Cyrus wrote.

Cyrus, who was 13 when she started in the role of Hannah on the Disney Channel show, said she thinks the ordeal would be overlooked if it was someone else and not her.

"I definitely feel like the press is trying to make me out as the new `BAD GIRL'!" she wrote. "I feel like now that Britney is back on top of her game again, they need someone to pick on! Lucky me!"

Phone and e-mail messages to Cyrus' representative were not immediately returned.

This is the latest image to get the tween role model in trouble.

Last April, several shots by Annie Leibovitz for Vanity Fair sparked national outrage. The cover showed Cyrus, then 15, wrapped in a sheet with a bare back and shoulders.

King, Malkovich among Madoff investor list names

NEW YORK (AP)—Larry King and John Malkovich were among the thousands of names listed as clients who invested with Bernard Madoff.

The list was made public Wednesday in a court filing in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Manhattan. It supplied a handful of bold-faced names that further evidenced the reach into the entertainment world of Madoff's alleged Ponzi scheme.

Larry King's spokesman, Howard Rubenstein, said the CNN host suffered "not substantial losses." Rubenstein declined to answer further questions on King's investments with Madoff.

Managers for Malkovich, whose films include "Dangerous Liaisons" and "In the Line of Fire," didn't return messages left Thursday.

Prosecutors say Madoff admits he lost more than $50 billion belonging to investors. Defense lawyers say he has cooperated with authorities to help identify assets.

The list—compiled by AlixPartners LLP, a Dallas company hired as claims agent by the trustee overseeing the liquidation of Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities LLC—wasn't necessarily comprehensive since some may have invested through an intermediary investment firm.

Previously, other Hollywood connections to the fallout from Madoff's alleged fraud emerged.

Kevin Bacon and his wife Kyra Sedgwick earlier acknowledged they had investments with Madoff, though they were not on the list. A lawyer for Zsa Zsa Gabor has said the 91-year-old actress may have lost as much as $10 million invested in the alleged Madoff pyramid scheme. She also was not on the list.

Carlos Mencia pulled from Mardi Gras parade

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Comedian Carlos Mencia was yanked Thursday from a Mardi Gras parade's list of celebrity riders for jokes made about Hurricane Katrina.

That's according to Krewe of Orpheus officials who on Wednesday announced Mencia as one of about a dozen celebrity guests slated to ride in this year's parade, which rolls through New Orleans on Feb. 23, the night before Mardi Gras.

But Orpheus Captain Sonny Borey said in a statement Thursday that the club became aware of "certain remarks Mr. Carlos Mencia has made in regards to New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina."

Borey said Mencia would not be riding because "our krewe is very sensitive to the feelings of our community and the way our city is viewed."

Borey did not provide details about what the comic said, but a clip of Mencia making jokes about Katrina victims in a standup routine can be found on the Web site YouTube.

Besides riding on one of the parade's 35 floats, Mencia had been scheduled to perform at the Orpheus ball after the parade.

Meanwhile, added to the celebrity list of riders Thursday was comic and television star Joan Rivers.

Borey said Rivers is not a replacement for Mencia.

"This is something that we've been working on for a while, and we are really excited we can finally announce it," he said.

CBS to devote entire morning show to hero pilot

NEW YORK (AP)—The ever competitive world of morning network television will see an intriguing battle for viewers on Monday: the hero pilot vs. the tired mom.

After an uncharacteristic loss in the booking competition, NBC's mighty "Today" show struck back late Thursday by announcing that Ann Curry's interview with Nadya Suleman, the California woman who gave birth to octuplets, will air on Monday.

"Today" is airing a quick tease of its interview on Friday.

Both ABC's "Good Morning America" and CBS' "The Early Show" are being visited Monday by pilot Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, who landed a disabled jet in the Hudson River with no fatalities last month.

AP
In this image released by CBS, Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger is shown with Katie Couric at home in his kitchen in Danville, Calif., on Jan. 30, 2009, during his first interview since the U.S.

CBS is devoting its entire show to the story of U.S. Airways Flight 1549.

"Today" producers thought it had a commitment from the Sullenberger family that the pilot would first sit down with Matt Lauer, and were angered when the pilot and his crew elected to be interviewed by Lauer's old partner, Katie Couric, on CBS' "60 Minutes" this Sunday.

An angry "Today" show said it was no longer interested in talking to Sullenberger.

"The Early Show" is perpetually third in the morning ratings. But it sensed a rare opportunity to get noticed with Sullenberger, especially since its show can be promoted on "60 Minutes" and the Grammy Awards the night before.

HOLLYWOOD THEATERS
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Pink Panther 2
Friday 4:10 7:10 9:40
Saturday 1:15 4:10 7:10 9:40
Sunday 1:15 4:10 7:10
Mon and Tues 4:10 7:10
Steve Martin, Andy Garcia
Comedy, Mystery • Rated PG
Synopsis
The continuing adventures of Inspector Jacques Clouseau. When legendary treasures from around the world are stolen, including the priceless Pink Panther Diamond, Chief Inspector Dreyfus (John Cleese) is forced to assign Clouseau to a team of international detectives and experts charged with cathcing the thief and retrieving the stolen artifacts.

Push
Friday 4:15 7:30 9:30
Saturday 1:10 4:15 7:30 9:30
Sunday 1:10 4:15 7:30
Mon and Tues 4:15 7:30
Chris Evans, Dakota Fanning
Thriller Supernatural • Rated PG 13
Synopsis
The Division, a shadowy government agency, is genetically transforming citizens into an army of psychic warriors and brutally disposing of those unwilling to participate. Nick Gant, a second-generation telekinetic or mover, has been in hiding since the Division murdered his father more than a decade earlier. He has found sanctuary in densely populated Hong Kong, the last safe place on earth for fugitive psychics like him, but only if he can keep his secret a gift.

Ang Tanging Ina N'yong Lahat
Friday 4:25 7:20 9:50
Saturday 1:30 4:25 7:20 9:50
Sunday 1:30 4:25 7:20
Mon and Tues 4:25 7:20
Ai-Ai de las Alas, Eugene Domingo
Comedy • Rated PG
Synopsis
With the one, big, happy family that she has, any woman would admire Ina Montecillo (Ai-Ai de las Alas) as the embodiment of a perfect mother. But after more than 40 years of doing everything for her family, she realizes she hasn't done anything for herself. Ina then embarks on a journey of finding her self-worth that surprisingly lands her as the president of the Philippines!

Coraline
Friday 4:05 7:25 9:35
Saturday 1:20 4:05 7:25 9:35
Sunday 1:20 4:05 7:25
Mon and Tues 4:05 7:25
Dakota Fanning, John Hodgman
Fantasy, Animated • Rated PG

He's Just Not That Into You
Friday 4:00 7:00 9:45
Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:45
Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:00
Mon and Tues 4:00 7:00
Jennifer Aniston, Scarlett Johansson
Romatic Comedy • Rated PG 13

★ ★ ★

Taken
Friday 4:30 7:15 9:55
Saturday 1:25 4:30 7:15 9:55
Sunday 1:25 4:30 7:15
Mon and Tues 4:30 7:15
Liam Neeson, Maggie Grace
Action, Drama, Thriller • Rated PG 13

Paul Blart, Mall Cop
Friday 4:20 7:05 10:00
Saturday 1:05 4:20 7:05 10:00
Sunday 1:05 4:20 7:05
Mon and Tues 4:20 7:05
Kevin James, Jayma Mays
Comedy • Rated PG

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Etta James 'can't stand' Beyonce

LOS ANGELES (AP)—We saw Beyonce play Etta James. We probably won't soon see the singing divas duet.

The 71-year-old singer says in an audio clip that surfaced online Thursday that she would "whip" Beyonce for singing "her song" "At Last" at an inaugural ball for President Barack Obama.

"The great Beyonce ... I can't stand Beyonce," James said in the clip from a Jan. 31 concert at the Boulevard Casino in Coquitlam, British Columbia. "She has no business up there, singing up there on a big ol' president day, gonna be singing my song that I've been singing forever."

Beyonce portrayed James—and sang the 1941 song written by Mack Gordon and Harry Warren—in the film "Cadillac Records" last year.

Spokespeople for James and Beyonce declined to comment.

AP

In this Nov. 24, 2008, file photo, Etta James arrives at the premiere of "Cadillac Records" in Los Angeles.

Zellweger parades around as Hasty Pudding honoree

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP)—Accompanied by Harvard men in drag, Renee Zellweger has been honored as the Hasty Pudding Theatricals woman of the year.

The actress rode in the back of a silver convertible Bentley during a parade through Harvard Square on Thursday. She waved to spectators who braved frigid temperatures and signed a few autographs, all the while capturing the event on her cell phone camera.

Hasty Pudding is the nation's oldest undergraduate drama troupe. By tradition, many of its male members wear women's clothes for the parade—one came dressed in a gold, sparkly dress.

The 39-year-old Zellweger won an supporting-actress Oscar for the 2003 film "Cold Mountain."

Actress Renee Zellweger, center, is kissed by Hasty Pudding Theatricals actors in drag Tom Compton, left, and Dave Andersson, right, during a parade through the Harvard Square neighborhood of Cambridge, Mass., Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009.

AP

Benjamin Button's house for sale in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Benjamin Button called it home in the movie—now sellers are looking for someone to call it home in real life.

The New Orleans house that was the setting for much of "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" is on the market.

The 7,800-square foot Garden District mansion has a huge yard, six bedrooms, six bathrooms, a library, music room and reception hall.

"It's much nicer than what people saw in the movie," said real estate agent Dorian Bennett. "It's more like Tara than a home for old people."

The movie was nominated for 13 Oscars, including best actor for Brad Pitt's starring role.

The house is being sold to settle the late owner's estate with an asking price of $2.85 million.

Swayze memoir coming out this fall

NEW YORK (AP)—A "deeply personal memoir" by Patrick Swayze and his wife is coming out this fall.

"The currently untitled book will offer an intimate account of Patrick Swayze's childhood, career and marriage, as well as his brave fight against a diagnosis of stage-four pancreatic cancer, from which he has gleaned wisdom and has remained resolutely optimistic," according to a statement released Thursday by Atria Books.

"Swayze's wife of over 30 years, Lisa Niemi, will give insight into the intensity of her experience and the enormity of helping a loved one battle a life-threatening disease."

The 56-year-old actor, known for such films as "Ghost" and "Dirty Dancing," stars in the new A&E drama "The Beast."

"With everything I've been fortunate enough to do in my life, and covering such a wide range of diverse subject matters, I'm told that my story has been inspirational to people," Swayze, diagnosed with cancer last year, said in a statement issued by Atria.

"I will write from my heart about these experiences and aside from the sheer pleasure of doing it, if people happen to garner inspiration from it, or incentive, or find a new way to love, it would be wonderful."

Atria is an imprint of Simon & Schuster.

In this Nov. 28, 2005 file photo, actress Patrick Swayze, right, accompanied by his wife Lisa Niemi pose prior to the premiere of his film "Keeping Mum" in central London.

AP

Parker and gal pals plan more 'Sex and the City'

In this undated file photo released by New Line Cinema, Sarah Jessica Parker stars as Carrie Bradshaw in New Line Cinema's "Sex in the City". "

AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—There's still sex to be had in the city, even though Carrie Bradshaw has settled down with one man.

New Line Cinema spokeswoman Candice McDonough confirms that "Sex and the City" star Sarah Jessica Parker, her three co-stars and writer-director Michael Patrick King are signed for a sequel to last year's hit movie.

The film will reunite Parker and gal pals Kim Cattrall, Kristin Davis and Cynthia Nixon.

In a statement, King says: "I'm very excited to work with these amazing actresses again and would love to give everyone more information about the sequel ... but I'm busy with my `Sex' life."

New Line parent Warner Bros. plans to have the sequel out in summer 2010.

Distaste for big wedding may mask deeper issues

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I am 21 and have been with a great guy, "Albert," who's 20, for more than a year. We're engaged to be married and live together in a condo we recently bought. We both work full time and support ourselves comfortably.

While I would love to marry Albert, I feel we are young and I see no need to rush into it. Things are wonderful between us, but I'm not really looking forward to a wedding.

Albert wants a formal wedding with family in attendance. He says his parents and other family members would be upset if we eloped and would have trouble forgiving him. I'm a rather reserved person, and the idea of being put in the spotlight, with all the hoopla and expense, is overwhelming. In fact, to elope would be perfect for me.

When I share my feelings with Albert, he becomes offended and accuses me of not being as "in love" with him as he is with me. I do love him, and I would be happy to be his wife. I'm just not interested in a ceremony and everything that goes with it. We need advice.

RELUCTANT BRIDE IN NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR RELUCTANT: The fact that you "see no need to rush" and say you're "not really looking forward to a wedding" indicates to me that while you love your fiance and theoretically would like to marry him someday, you are not yet ready to make that final commitment. Albert may be picking up on your ambivalence, which is why he says you don't love him as much as he loves you and becomes "offended" when you try to discuss your feelings.

Of one thing I am certain: You should not elope or have any other kind of wedding right now. What you should do is talk with your clergyperson. Premarital counseling, which is offered by most denominations, will help to ensure that you and Albert are in agreement about other important topics, including (but not limited to) how you plan to handle finances, how many children you want, how they should be raised, etc. These are issues that can make or break a marriage.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: Not long ago, I returned to my hometown for a funeral and reconnected with a distant cousin I hadn't seen since high school. "Jake" and I were close growing up, but had lost touch after I moved away at 17.

Since my trip home we have been in constant contact. Over Thanksgiving, Jake joined me for a long weekend getaway. He also made plans for us to be together on New Year's Eve and to take some other fun trips. We both feel we could have a future together, but we're worried about what people back home will say. (It's a small town where everyone knows everything.)

Jake remains very close to some of my other family, so it would be hard to drop the "cousin" role. I spoke with my doctor before getting involved; he confirmed there are no medical reasons why we shouldn't. We're sixth cousins, but were raised as if we were closer than that.

Have you any advice on how to make the transition from cousins to a couple?

RELATED IN OREGON

DEAR RELATED: Sixth cousins are so distantly related that there is no reason why you shouldn't be a couple if you wish to be. Becoming a couple is an evolution. Let the relationship evolve -- and don't be secretive. People who love you should be happy for both of you.

■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

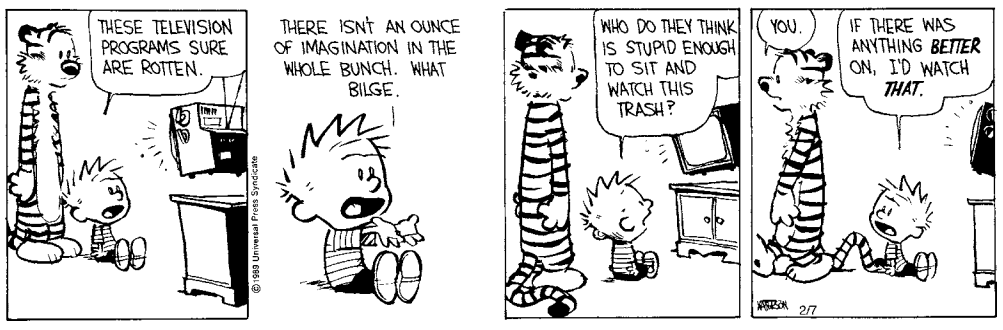
■■■

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $12 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


THESE TELEVISION PROGRAMS SURE ARE ROTTEN.
THERE ISN'T AN OUNCE OF IMAGINATION IN THE WHOLE BUNCH. WHAT BILGE.
WHO DO THEY THINK IS STUPID ENOUGH TO SIT AND WATCH THIS TRASH?
YOU.
IF THERE WAS ANYTHING BETTER ON, I'D WATCH THAT.
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Garfield®

By Jim Davis

OH, GREAT...
THIS IS GONNA BE ALL ABOUT YOU AGAIN, ISN'T IT?
JIM DAVIS 2-7
© 2009 PAWS, INC. All Rights Reserved.
www.garfield.com
Distributed by Universal Uclick for Universal Press Syndicate

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

KIDS, GRAB A LIGHT JACKET—WE'RE GOING OUT TO EAT TONIGHT!
PUT YOUR SHOES BACK ON BEFORE THEY ASK US TO LEAVE.
SHOES?? YOU DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT NEEDING SHOES.
2-7
Bryan Basset
www.adamathome.com
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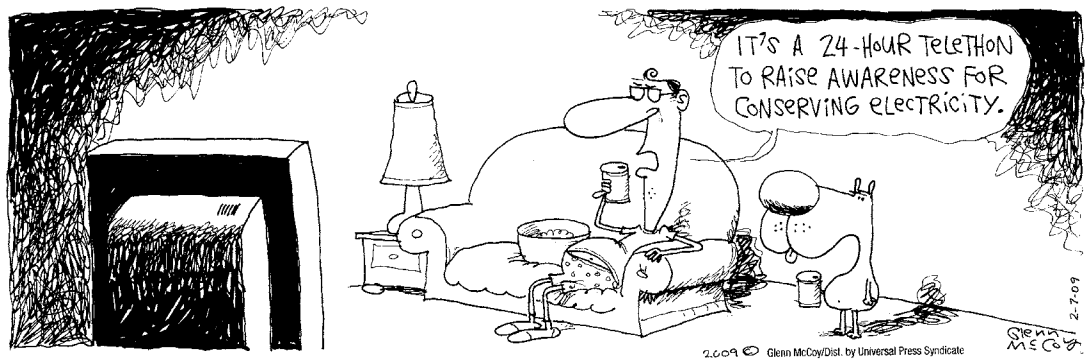
The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


IT'S A 24-HOUR TELETHON TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR CONSERVING ELECTRICITY.
2-7-09
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CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 They're often manicured
6 Baffler
12 IT guy
13 Forgo restraint
14 Ancient
15 Intoxicates
16 Extinct bird of Mauritius
17 Dumbstruck
19 Broke bread
20 Gyro holder
22 Thither
24 Photo badges, e.g.
27 Ostentatious manners
29 Cabinet div.
32 Nursery-rhyme baker
35 Membership
36 Apprehend
37 Potential syrup
38 Existed
40 San —, Italy
42 Arts deg.
44 Reviewer Pauline
46 Tennis champ who wed Agassi
50 Wicker material
52 Throw off the track
54 "— Eleven"
55 Without variations
56 Backhand, e.g.
57 Classroom array

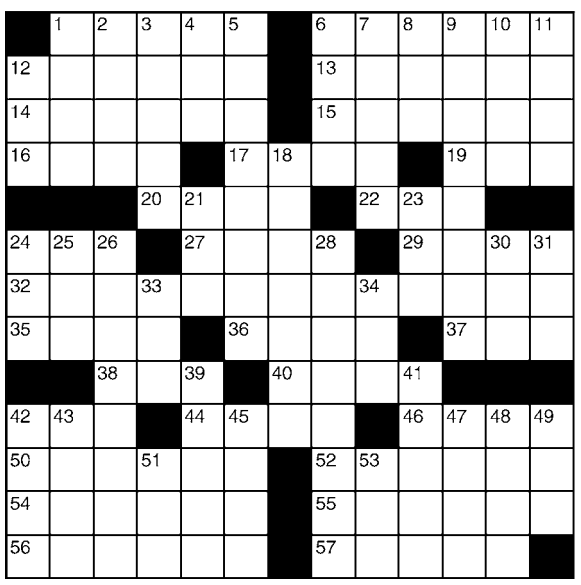
DOWN

1 Building-block name
2 Scored 100 on
3 Jubilant shout
4 Zero
5 Tranquilized state
6 North Sea feeder
7 Indigent
8 Part of TGIF
9 Bad puns
10 Catcher's aid
11 Church section
12 Young Mr. Lincoln
18 Hostilities
21 Author Fleming
23 Harem room
24 Mensa stats
25 Soon to arrive
26 Salty fluid
28 Protected
30 Sch. grp.
31 Recipe meas.
33 Greek vowel
34 Shade source
39 Sleazy one (Sl.)
41 Monsters
42 Family-biz abbr.
43 Bit of truth
45 "As I Lay Dying" character
47 File partner
48 Isn't up to par
49 Aviate
51 "The way" in China
53 Leading lady

Solution time: 27 mins.

S	H	E	■	F	L	E	E	■	P	L	U	S
L	O	T	■	A	I	R	Y	■	R	I	F	E
O	M	N	I	V	O	R	E	■	U	P	O	N
B	E	A	C	O	N	■	S	A	D	■	■	■
■	■	■	H	R	S	■	O	M	E	L	E	T
A	T	H	O	S	■	F	R	Y	■	A	A	H
T	H	A	R	■	H	U	E	■	C	U	R	E
M	E	R	■	P	A	N	■	S	I	D	L	E
O	M	E	G	A	S	■	C	A	R	■	■	■
■	■	■	I	D	S	■	A	C	C	E	N	T
C	H	U	M	■	O	M	P	H	A	L	O	S
P	E	R	M	■	C	A	R	E	■	S	P	A
A	N	N	E	■	K	N	I	T	■	E	E	R

Yesterday's answer 2-7



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Tina Majorino, 24; Ashton Kutcher, 31; Chris Rock, 44; Garth Brooks, 47

Happy Birthday: Change is upon you and the opportunities available will help to restructure your future. Stability and security should be your goal but not without a little pizzazz. You never have stuck to the usual channels in the past, so why should you now? It's the way you do things that will separate you from the crowd. Your numbers are 8, 11, 24, 28, 32, 41, 44

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Be prepared to counteract changes that may not suit your needs or plans. If you have to compromise in order to get your way, do so without hesitation. Avoid any potentially dangerous situations while traveling. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Push back if someone is playing with your emotions or giving you a hard time. Stand up for your rights but avoid meddling in other people's affairs. You can make some positive changes at home. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Be prepared for last minute alterations that may disrupt your plans. If you are quick to recognize what's going on, you can keep things moving along smoothly. Your ability to react will be impressive and will win you favors and respect. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You'll be sensitive and in the moment. You will find out soon enough where you stand, so you can put in place whatever is required to fill any void you are experiencing. The use of emotional blackmail will only lead to more trouble. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You can expect to receive a surprise that will change your life and your plans for the future. A partnership appears to be all charged up. Reassess and make the changes that will help you prosper and advance the most. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You will be influenced by someone you care about but, before you buy into his or her plan, be sure it is valid. Questions and discussions will give you greater control of your situation. There is money to be made. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Don't hesitate to get in touch with someone from your past who comes to mind. You can make some alterations at home that will help you move forward in a positive way. Get rid of the old and bring in the new. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): It's time to enhance your personal image and build your confidence so you can face any challenge with power and knowledge. Self-deception will hold you back. Change will be good for you but you must implement it yourself. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): If you want to get the most out of someone, be understanding, affectionate and willing to put him or her first. Someone from your past will be of great comfort to you now. Be honest in all your interactions with others. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Change is good and will help you realize your own potential. Once you know what's expected of you, you can leap forward in a positive fashion. A commitment can be made and a new life started. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't divulge your secrets or you will be taken the wrong way and put in an awkward position. Consider your motives and those of the people you deal with. If you let your emotions take over, expect mistakes. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Reevaluate the past so you don't make the same blunder again. An opportunity will become available to reunite with someone who can help you, if you join forces and work together. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: Your willingness to accept change and use it to your benefit will lead to your success throughout life. You are a humanitarian and a master at developing and implementing reform.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		5	9					
		6				8		
1	9				8		3	
6				4		2		
			7		5			
		2		6				1
	1		6				9	4
		4				6		
					2	7		

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/07

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

3	1	2	5	6	4	7	9	8
8	5	7	2	1	9	4	6	3
4	6	9	7	3	8	2	5	1
7	8	6	3	9	5	1	2	4
2	4	1	8	7	6	9	3	5
5	9	3	4	2	1	6	8	7
9	3	4	6	5	7	8	1	2
1	2	8	9	4	3	5	7	6
6	7	5	1	8	2	3	4	9

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 2/06

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

WHILE WAITING **Solution: 5 letters**

T	A	P	S	G	N	I	T	T	I	S	Y	S	U	B
T	N	A	R	U	A	T	S	E	R	E	D	O	O	F
E	X	E	C	A	O	S	T	N	A	L	P	R	T	R
L	I	S	M	T	C	V	D	I	C	U	E	I	H	I
E	O	E	E	T	I	T	R	N	R	D	X	S	I	E
V	U	W	V	N	N	V	I	E	I	E	H	E	N	N
I	S	D	R	E	O	I	I	C	N	H	D	S	K	D
S	I	G	N	I	N	H	O	T	E	C	E	U	I	S
I	G	A	L	A	T	I	P	P	I	S	M	B	N	R
O	N	P	O	M	T	E	N	R	P	E	A	L	G	E
N	S	E	O	U	O	S	I	G	A	A	S	E	A	H
A	E	E	K	S	N	O	I	T	P	E	C	E	R	C
M	M	L	T	I	M	E	R	E	A	D	E	S	K	A
E	A	S	H	C	T	A	W	A	N	D	E	R	R	E
T	G	N	I	N	W	A	Y	P	A	T	I	E	N	T

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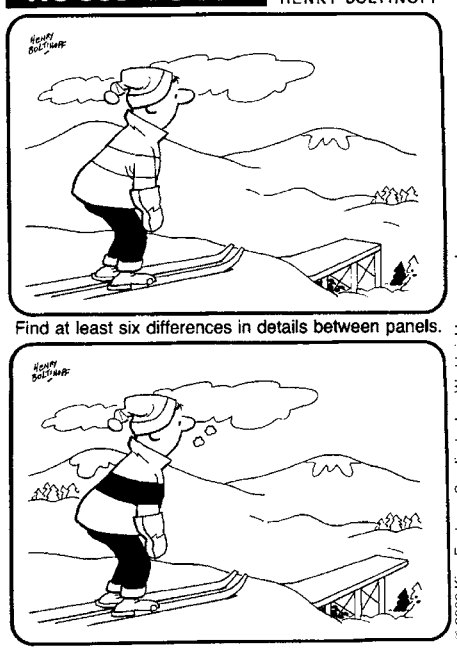
Activities, Anxious, Appointment, Area, Behind, Bored, Buses, Busy, Calm, Desk, Earphones, Evening, Exit, Food, Friends, Games, Look, Music, Name, Nervous, Patient, Plants, Practices, Read, Reception, Restaurant, Room, Schedules, Sign-in, Signs, Sitting, Sleep, Stand, Talk, Teachers, Television, Thinking, Time, Tired, Wander, Watch, Write, Yawning

Yesterday's Answer: Avocado

We listened to your requests! **TREASURY #6** is the first-ever Wonderword book containing only 20 x 20 puzzles, with 75 of these large puzzles. To order, send check or money order for $10.95 each plus $3.25 p&h ($14.20 total each. U.S. funds only) for the first volume, $1.50 p&h for each additional volume, to Wonderword, Universal Press Syndicate, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free 1-800-642-6480. Order online at upuzzles.com.

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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Differences: 1. Sweater stripe is black. 2. Breath puffs added. 3. Nose is smaller. 4. Ski ramp is longer. 5. Snow added to mountain on left. 6. Trees added on left.

Wishing Well®

4	7	3	7	4	2	8	2	8	2	5	6	5
A	N	P	I	N	R	B	A	E	D	J	N	O
6	3	4	3	4	7	5	8	7	2	3	5	7
O	R	I	A	N	G	Y	C	H	I	I	F	T
2	7	8	2	4	5	8	2	5	8	2	4	3
A	T	H	T	C	O	E	E	R	E	L	R	S
5	8	4	7	5	2	4	6	3	5	4	3	4
P	R	E	I	A	O	A	G	E	S	S	C	E
6	3	2	4	5	2	7	5	4	3	4	7	5
O	O	V	I	T	E	M	A	N	W	T	E	C
4	7	6	7	4	3	4	5	3	4	3	7	4
H	F	O	U	E	O	F	T	R	A	K	N	M
5	3	4	5	4	8	4	3	8	5	8	6	6
I	E	I	O	L	F	Y	R	U	N	L	F	S

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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Super Crossword

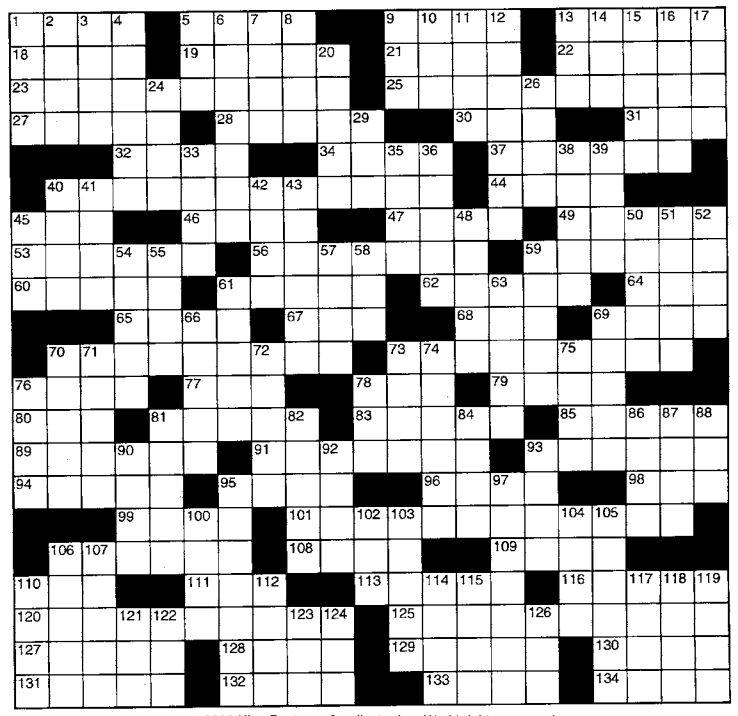
SIX-FOOTERS

ACROSS

1 Kite or coot
5 Chihuahua snack
9 "Goodbye, Columbus" author
13 Egyptian Nobelist
18 Sore
19 Addis —
21 Merrill melody
22 Menander's marketplace
23 6' actress
25 6' comedian
27 Cook clams
28 Trickles
30 Clean-air org.
31 Cartoon cry
32 Wool gatherer?
34 Not — many words
37 "Animal Farm" author
40 6' actor
44 Garfield's pal
45 Tie the knot
46 38 Down, for one
47 — impasse
49 Sour sort
53 Swallow up
56 Undergoes
59 Make a pile?
60 Pool person
61 Puzzling problem
62 Scarlett's sweetheart
64 Actress Hagen
65 Potter's need
67 Browning's bedtime?
68 Diva Marton
69 Young or King
70 6' designer
73 6' author
76 Art deco figure
77 Marsh
78 Parenthesis shape
79 Melodious McEntire
80 Deli loaf
81 Robert of "The Citadel"
83 Feline, familiarly
85 Force
89 '66 Michael Caine movie
91 Supervise
93 Take for granted
94 Attack
95 They may get cold
96 Ring out
98 Fix a fight
99 And others
101 6' singer
106 Paraguayan title
108 Mediocre
109 When pigs whistle, to Tennyson
110 Mongrel
111 Address abbr.
113 Actress Hedren
116 Gettysburg commander
120 6' trumpeter
125 6' anthropologist
127 Doll up
128 Ireland
129 County in 128 Across
130 Scorch
131 Pass on
132 Crowdburst?
133 Part of a threat
134 Connecticut campus

DOWN

1 Supermarket supplies
2 "New Jack City" actor
3 Korean statesman
4 Go-getter
5 Lincoln son
6 Disconcerts
7 Spelunker's spot
8 Tony's cousin
9 Scott's "The — Quartet"
10 Mispickel, e.g.
11 Become winded
12 Queequeg's weapon
13 Mr. Mineo
14 Season firewood
15 Peg
16 Shakespearean sprite
17 Chore
20 Clear jelly
24 Love, to Livy
26 Grounds
29 — -Cat (winter transport)
33 Relief initials?
35 Constellation component
36 Furry fisherman
38 Cowes' locale
39 First name in architecture
40 Fellow
41 Brink
42 Role for Liz
43 Has a hunch
45 Craven or Unseld
48 Peter of Peter and Gordon
50 It's down in the mouth
51 Copper or cobalt
52 Mastermind
54 Quitter's cry
55 Vegetate
57 "Disco Duck" singer
58 Keatsian crock
59 Barrel part
61 Tower
63 Each's partner
66 Head monk
69 See 70 Down
70 With 69 Down, "Heaven" singer
71 Stuff
72 Dumbstruck
73 "True —" ('69 film)
74 Arm-y types?
75 Wading bird
76 Therefore
78 Canine grp.
81 "Same here!"
82 Lock
84 "Lemon —" ('65 hit)
86 Immaculate
87 Kuwaiti kingpin
88 Turkey serving
90 "I've — had!"
92 Conductor Klemperer
93 — vera
95 Roaring Twenties figure
97 Canvas shades
100 Inland sea
102 Superlative suffix
103 Nullifies
104 "Nautilus" captain
105 Formal
106 Kid stuff?
107 Comic Leon
110 Canterbury cleaner
112 Austin or Copley
114 Velvet feature
115 Bucket
117 On the briny
118 Distribute the deck
119 Rochester's missus
121 It may be strapless
122 Whichever
123 Carnival site
124 Big bang letters
126 Adversary



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Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

1. PSYCHOLOGY: What is lachanophobia a fear of?
2. MUSIC: What other musical instrument does the marimba most closely resemble?
3. FAMOUS QUOTATIONS: Which entertainer once said: "Tragedy is when I cut my finger. Comedy is when you fall into an open sewer and die."?
4. MEASUREMENTS: What does a caliper measure?
5. ENTERTAINERS: What famous entertainer was born Eldred Peck?
6. LANGUAGE: What is something that is described as a "cakewalk"?
7. GEOGRAPHY: Which of Canada's provinces has the slogan, "La Belle Province"?
8. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a young swan called?
9. MOVIES: Which movie featured a girl gang called the Pink Ladies?
10. U.S. OLYMPICS: In which sport is the pommel horse used?

Answers

1. Vegetables
2. Xylophone
3. Mel Brooks
4. Diameter or thickness
5. Gregory Peck
6. An easy task
7. Quebec
8. Cygnet
9. "Grease"
10. Gymnastics

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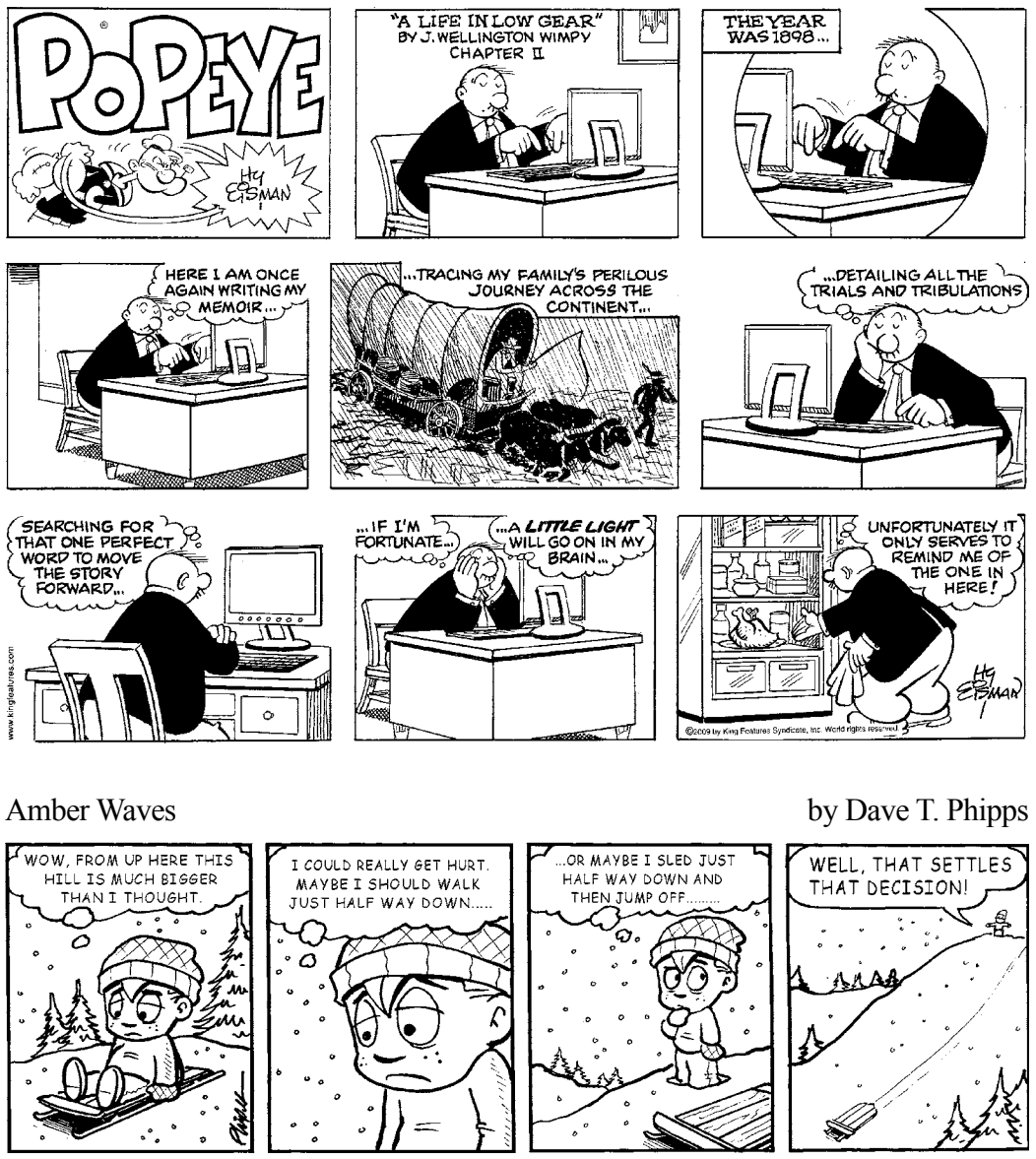
Saturday's Answers


POPEYE
HEY EISMAN!
"A LIFE IN LOW GEAR" BY J. WELLINGTON WIMPY CHAPTER II
THE YEAR WAS 1898...
HERE I AM ONCE AGAIN WRITING MY MEMOIR...
...TRACING MY FAMILY'S PERILOUS JOURNEY ACROSS THE CONTINENT...
...DETAILING ALL THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS
SEARCHING FOR THAT ONE PERFECT WORD TO MOVE THE STORY FORWARD...
...IF I'M FORTUNATE...
...A LITTLE LIGHT WILL GO ON IN MY BRAIN...
UNFORTUNATELY IT ONLY SERVES TO REMIND ME OF THE ONE IN HERE!
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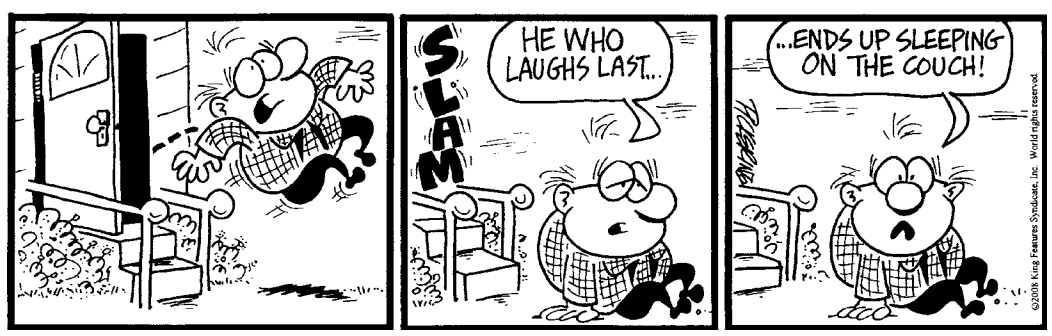
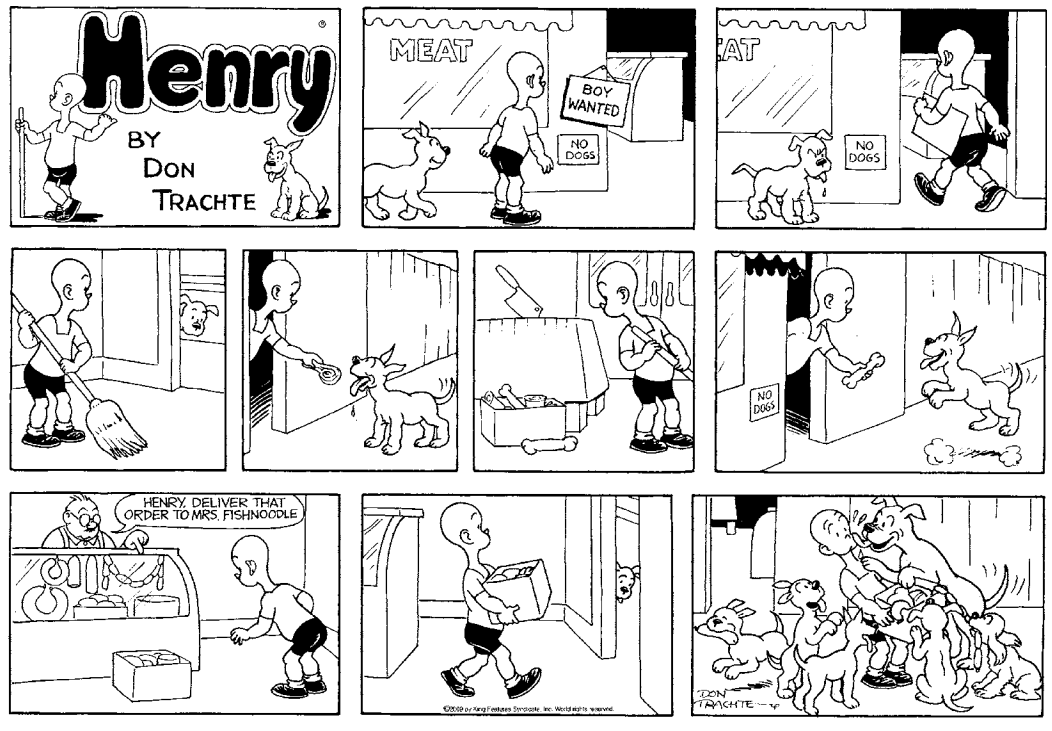
Amber Waves by Dave T. Phipps

WOW, FROM UP HERE THIS HILL IS MUCH BIGGER THAN I THOUGHT.
I COULD REALLY GET HURT. MAYBE I SHOULD WALK JUST HALF WAY DOWN.....
...OR MAYBE I SLED JUST HALF WAY DOWN AND THEN JUMP OFF.....
WELL, THAT SETTLES THAT DECISION!

The Spats by Jeff Pickering



MARK TRAIL
A NATIVE OF NORTHERN ASIA AND JAPAN, THE RACCOON DOG HAS SPREAD INTO NORTHERN EUROPE
TAKING OVER EMPTY BADGER OR FOX DENS, THE RACCOON DOG ENLARGES THEM A BIT FOR COMFORTABLE WINTER SLEEPING
EXCEPT FOR ITS DEFINITELY DOG-LIKE FEET AND SHORT RINGLESS TAIL, THE ASIAN RACCOON DOG RESEMBLES A RACCOON TO AN AMAZING DEGREE
FRUIT, BERRIES, ACORNS, SEEDS AND VEGETATION, AS WELL AS SMALL MAMMALS, FISH, INSECTS AND AMPHIBIANS, MAKE UP ITS DIET
IN SOME AREAS THE ANIMAL IS VALUABLE FOR ITS PELT AS WELL AS ITS FLESH
LIKE ITS NAMESAKE, IT IS EVEN AN OMNIVOROUS FEEDER
BESIDES ITS ODD APPEARANCE, IT IS UNIQUE IN ANOTHER WAY...
IT IS THE ONLY MEMBER OF THE CANINE FAMILY THAT HIBERNATES IN COLD WEATHER
JACK ELROD



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USA Swimming suspends Phelps for 3 months

By PAUL NEWBERRY and BETH HARRIS
AP SPORTS WRITERS

Michael Phelps' day grew lousier by the hour on Thursday. First he lost a major sponsor, then he got suspended. The Olympic great was suspended from competition for three months by USA Swimming, the latest fallout from a photo that showed him inhaling from a marijuana pipe.

The sport's national governing body also cut off its financial support to Phelps for the same three-month period, effective immediately.

"This is not a situation where any anti-doping rule was violated, but we decided to send a strong message to Michael because he disappointed so many people, particularly the hundreds of thousands of USA Swimming member kids who look up to him as a role model and a hero," the Colorado Springs-based federation said in a statement.

"Michael has voluntarily accepted this reprimand and has committed to earn back our trust."

Phelps won a record eight gold medals in Beijing and returned to America as one of the world's most acclaimed athletes. He made headlines of a different kind, however, in the wake of the photo, published Sunday by News of the World, a British tabloid.

Earlier Thursday, cereal and snack maker Kellogg Co. announced it wouldn't renew its sponsorship contract with Phelps, saying his behavior is "not consistent with the image of Kellogg." The swimmer appeared on the company's cereal boxes after his Olympic triumph.

"Michael accepts these decisions and understands their point of view," said one of his agents, Drew Johnson. "He feels bad he let anyone down. He's also encouraged by the thousands of comments he's received from his fans and the support from his many sponsors. He intends to work hard to regain everyone's trust."

Phelps' coach, Bob Bowman, said he believes Phelps will emerge from the experience a stronger swimmer and person.

"Michael's been through a lot and he's learned a lot, hopefully," Bowman told The Associated Press during a telephone interview. "I support him and I want to see him do better. I'm here, as always, to try to help him move forward. He's learned some tough lessons and he's disappointed a lot of people, me included."

AP

Olympic gold medalist Michael Phelps takes a break while training at the Meadowbrook Aquatic Center, Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009, in Baltimore.

Phelps has acknowledged "regrettable" behavior and "bad judgment." He didn't dispute the authenticity of the photo, reportedly taken at a house party while Phelps was visiting Columbia, S.C., in November during an extended break from training.

"I certainly understand USA Swimming needed to take action," Bowman said. "We will certainly abide by everything they've put down."

USA Swimming provides a $1,750 monthly stipend to national team members to help defray travel and training expenses, plus performance bonuses. However, it's a small percentage of the millions Phelps makes through endorsements.

The 23-year-old has resumed training in his hometown of Baltimore, but his plans to return to competitive swimming will have to be put on hold. Phelps had planned to compete in early March at a Grand Prix meet in Austin, Texas.

Now, he won't be able to compete until early May, which would give him a little more than two months for some racing before July's world championships in Rome.

"This is the result of a poor decision Michael made," U.S. Olympic Committee spokesman Darryl Seibel said in an e-mail. "He understands there is accountability and has pledged to not repeat this in the future. We have offered our assistance to make certain he is as consistent and successful away from the pool as he is in it, and we are confident that will happen."

After the suspension, Phelps would be able to compete at a May meet in Charlotte, N.C.; there's another Grand Prix competition in Santa Clara, Calif., the following month. The U.S. team for Rome will be chosen at the national championships, which begin July 7 in Indianapolis.

"He's been very good in practice," Bowman said. "I think he feels good to be back in the water. Certainly, he's not in very good shape.

"We're anxious to get back to a really normal routine and we have. We're moving on."

Several of Phelps' Olympic teammates rallied to his defense. Among them was Dara Torres, the 41-year-old silver medalist whom Phelps jokingly referred to in Beijing as "Mom."

"I see him as a kid trying to grow up in the most intense spotlight known to any athlete. He has apologized and what else can he do?" she told the AP by telephone. "The thing I hope is that people realize Michael is still a person and not just a swimming hero."

Torres said she sent Phelps a text a few days ago to extend her support.

"He didn't let the USA down at the games, so we shouldn't let him down," she said.

Torres doesn't expect a three-month suspension in a non-Olympic year to have much affect on Phelps' career. He intends to keep swimming through the 2012 London Games.

"Knowing Michael the way I do, I guarantee you it's going to make him want to do well," Torres said. "All this is going to do is light a fire under him."

Amanda Beard compared Phelps' ordeal to some of the disdain she faced after posing nude in Playboy magazine before the Beijing Games.

"If anyone knows public scrutiny, it's me," the four-time Olympian said in a text message. "When I posed for Playboy, so many officials looked down on me. Michael knows he isn't a bad person. He made a mistake. People need to get over it. I want to cheer him on in London."

Gold medalist Ryan Lochte, who was one of Phelps' teammates and main rivals in Bejing, said: "It really is kind of harsh. It's just a picture."

And even a rival agent came to Phelps' defense.

"Enough is enough," said Evan Morgenstein, who represents a large number of Olympic swimmers. "The penalty is far greater than the crime. He has said he is sorry. Let's move on to the real problems in this country."

Judge may toss some evidence in Bonds case

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Prosecutors trying to prove Barry Bonds lied when he denied knowingly using performance-enhancing drugs suffered a setback Thursday, with a federal judge saying she might toss some of the strongest evidence against the home-run king.

U.S. District Judge Susan Illston said her "preliminary thoughts" were to exclude from trial three 2000-2001 positive drug tests that prosecutors say belong to Bonds unless there is a direct link that the urine samples came from the former San Francisco Giants slugger.

"If there's no testimony to establish that, I don't think any of them work," Illston said.

The only person who can do that seems to be Bonds' personal trainer, Greg Anderson, who spent more than a year behind bars for refusing to speak to a federal grand jury investigating Bonds. And Anderson's attorney, Mark Geragos, has said his client will not testify against Bonds at the trial, scheduled to start March 2.

Without someone to authenticate that the test results were from Bonds' urine, Illston said claims that the tests were Bonds' were "classic hearsay."

Based on the same logic, Illston said she likely also would exclude a doping calendar and other papers seized by federal investigators at Anderson's home.

She was inclined, however, to allow a recorded conversation between Anderson and Bonds' former personal assistant Steve Hoskins in which they discuss injecting steroids. Hoskins recorded the conversation without Anderson's knowledge.

Illston will issue a formal decision on the evidence discussed Thursday at a later date. She also will hold a separate hearing on whether to allow testimony from expert doctors the government hopes would persuade a jury that changes in Bonds' body were due to steroid use.

According to court documents, Bonds tested positive on three separate occasions in 2000 and 2001 for the steroid methenelone in urine samples; he also tested positive two of those three times for the steroid nandrolone.

The three positive drug tests—seized during a 2003 raid of the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative, the headquarters of a large-scale sports doping ring—are a key part of the government's effort to prove Bonds lied when he told a grand jury that year he never knowingly took performance-enhancing drugs.

The judge and the lawyers didn't discuss a fourth positive steroids test seized in 2004 from a lab used by Major League Baseball to test its players in 2003.

The difference between that test and the three positive tests from 2000-2001 is there's no need to authenticate them.

Prosecutors said former BALCO executive James Valente is prepared to testify that Anderson handed him the three biological samples and told him they belonged to Bonds. But the judge said Valente's testimony was not enough to link the sample and Bonds.

Victor Conte, BALCO's founder, has always maintained that Bonds' biological samples were tested "down and dirty" and unreliable.

"These alleged Bonds test results and records not only lack a chain of custody and contain inaccuracies, but they also involve people with no formal training," Conte said in an e-mail Wednesday. "This causes uncertainty and creates doubt regarding the validity of this testing and record keeping evidence."

Without those three positive tests, the government's next-best evidence is Hoskins' recording of Anderson discussing undetectable steroids.

Hoskins said he made the secret clubhouse recording in front of Bonds' locker in March 2003. Hoskins said he was trying to obtain evidence to show Bonds' skeptical father Bobby Bonds, a former Major Leaguer who died of cancer in August 2003, that his son was using steroids.

Bonds' attorneys offered the judge a more sinister motivation for Hoskins to make the recording without Anderson's knowledge: blackmail. Bonds told the FBI shortly after the recording was made that Hoskins was stealing from him by forging his autograph on Bonds' memorabilia.

"He wanted to get some protection from the investigation that he knew was coming," Bonds' attorney, Dennis Riordan, said. The FBI dropped its brief investigation of Hoskins soon after without charging him with any crimes.

First indicted in November 2007, Bonds pleaded not guilty for a third time Thursday after the government revised the charges to fix legal technicalities. He now faces 10 counts of making false statements to a grand jury, plus an obstruction of justice charge.

If convicted, Bonds faces a sentence between probation and two years in prison.

If her preliminary thoughts stand, the government's case against Bonds will suffer a significant blow—but not a fatal one, legal analysts said.

"It hurts, but the government still has quite a bit of other evidence," Golden Gate University law professor Peter Keane said.

The judge plans to hold a separate court hearing to determine whether the prosecution can call to the witness stand Dr. Larry Bowers, the medical director for the United States Anti-Doping Agency. Bonds' attorneys argue that the science of steroid effects is inconclusive.

Prosecutors said in court papers that Bowers "will testify that steroid users develop such symptoms as increased muscle mass, shrunken testicles, acne on the upper back, moodiness, and an erratic sexual drive."

The prosecutors said they also will call "witnesses close to Bonds who will testify that Bonds exhibited some or all of these symptoms between approximately 1998 and 2003."

Keane said that physical side effects that Bonds appears to have experienced—such as sudden head growth—is still part of the government's case.

"The main evidence against Barry is his body," Keane said. "That's the whole ballgame."

Lakers snap another Boston streak

BOSTON (AP)—Lamar Odom made a pair of free throws with 16 seconds left in overtime to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a 110-109 victory over Boston on Thursday night and snap the Celtics' 12-game winning streak.

Kobe Bryant scored 26 points with 10 rebounds and Paul Gasol had 24 and 14 for the Lakers, who also snapped Boston's 19-game winning streak on Christmas Day and sent the Celtics into a 2-7 skid that is the worst stretch of the New Big Three era.

Paul Pierce scored 21, and newly minted All-Star Ray Allen had 22, but he missed a desperation, off-balance shot at the buzzer while Boston fans clamored for a foul call. Rajon Rondo scored 16 with 12 assists, and Kevin Garnett scored 16 before fouling out with 4:22 left in the fourth quarter.

It was a physical meeting that featured a pair of double-technicals and enough shoving to pass for a playoff game, but both teams were tired when it ended.

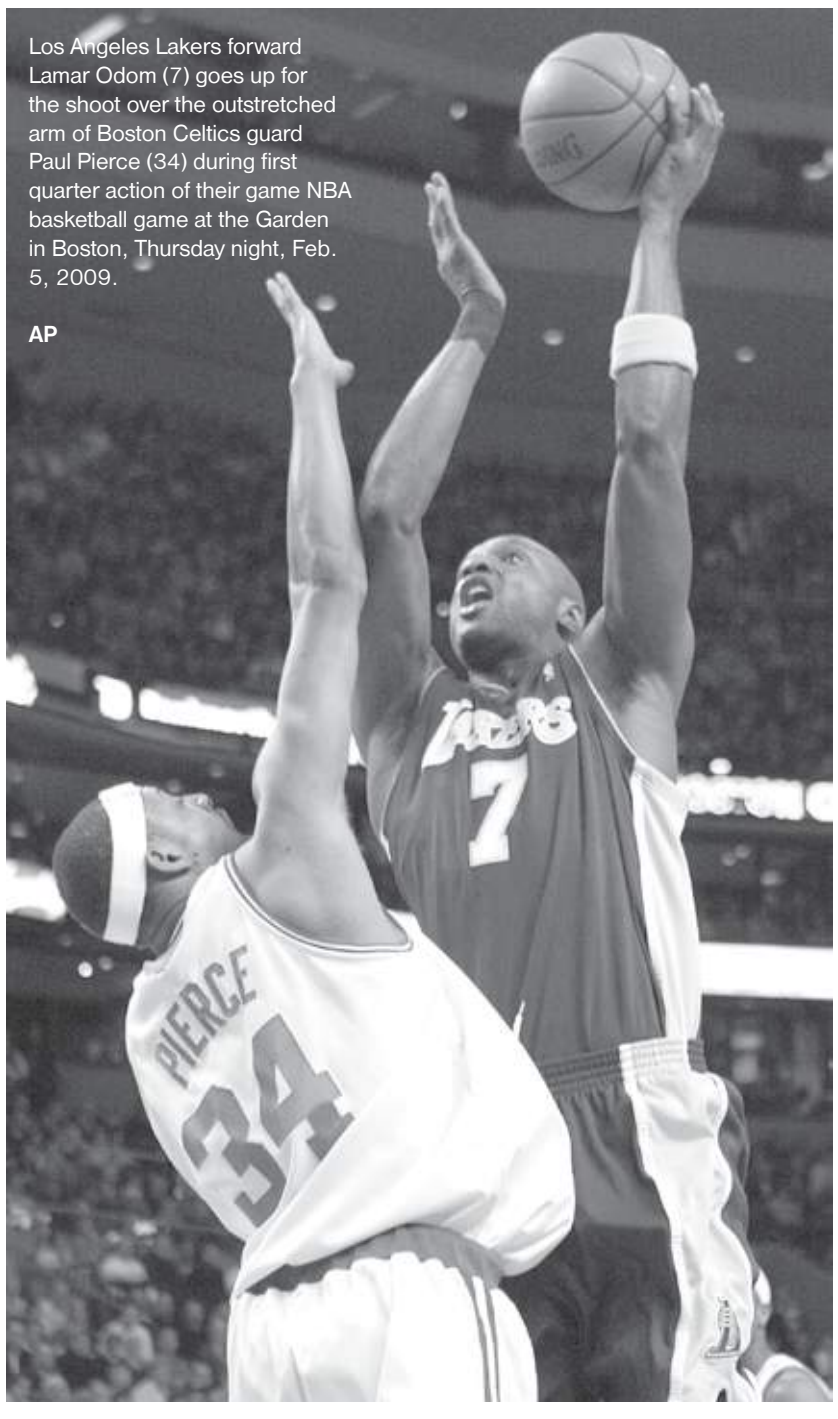
Bryant, who scored 61 and 36 in his previous two games, hit three 3-pointers in the fourth quarter, the last with 1:30 left in regulation and Pierce in his face to make it 101-100—the Lakers' first lead of the half. But after Pierce made one of two free throws with 30 seconds left, Bryant tried to shoot over Pierce again and banged it off the rim.

After a timeout with 7.7 seconds left, Pierce dribbled the clock down before Bryant poked the ball away. Eddie House got it and put up a sideways, one-handed 3-point attempt at the buzzer that wasn't close.

Bryant missed his last five shots of the game.

Gasol made one of two free throws to give the Lakers a 108-107 lead with 1:11 left, then Glen "Big Baby" Davis made a jumper—his only basket of the game after six misses. Kobe missed over Pierce, then Davis missed again and fouled Odom, who sank them both.

The Celtics got the ball to Pierce, but his shot was off. Rondo got the rebound and drew a foul, but it wasn't a shooting foul. The inbounds pass made it to Allen, but he was out of position and never got a good look.



Los Angeles Lakers forward Lamar Odom (7) goes up for the shoot over the outstretched arm of Boston Celtics guard Paul Pierce (34) during first quarter action of their game NBA basketball game at the Garden in Boston, Thursday night, Feb. 5, 2009.

AP

Jazz 115, Mavericks 87

In Salt Lake City, Deron Williams shook off a deep thigh bruise and scored 34 points and handed out 12 assists to lead Utah to a rout of Dallas.

Kyle Korver scored a season-high 20 points in his first start of the season, Ronnie Brewer scored 17 and Mehmet Okur added 16 points and 13 rebounds for the Jazz.

Josh Howard led Dallas with 18 points and Dirk Nowitzki scored 14—needing 20 attempts to get there—but the Mavericks saw their four-game winning streak end. It was Dallas' first loss since coach Rick Carlisle put Jason Kidd in charge of calling plays.

76ers 99, Pacers 94

In Philadelphia, Samuel Dalembert had 18 points and 20 rebounds, and Andre Miller and Andre Iguodala also had double-doubles to lead Philadelphia over Indiana.

The Sixers won only hours after they learned power forward Elton Brand needed season-ending surgery on his right shoulder. The Sixers improved to 11-8 this season without Brand, an encouraging sign their playoff push will continue without their $80 million man.

Miller had 13 points and 12 assists, while Iguodala had 20 points and 11 assists.

Indiana dropped its third straight.

Brand out for season with shoulder injury

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Elton Brand's first season in Philadelphia is over.

Brand will have season-ending surgery on his right shoulder Monday, reducing the 76ers' marquee free-agent to only 29 games. Brand was first injured Dec. 17 against Milwaukee and has played in six games since his return.

He signed a five-year deal worth nearly $80 million in July and averaged only 13.8 points and 8.8 rebounds in 29 games. Brand missed all but nine games of last season with a torn Achillies'.

"It's the most disappointed I've ever been in my career," Brand said. "This was supposed to be special. This was supposed to be winning, supposed to be fun. Management believed in me. I'm still not going to let them down."

Brand had an MRI after sitting out the second half of a 100-99 loss to Boston on Tuesday night. The Sixers first said Wednesday the test revealed no new damage to his right shoulder, and he could play against Indiana on Thursday night

The MRI results were reviewed by team doctor Jack McPhilemy and Dr. Craig Morgan, of the Morgan-Kalman Clinic in Wilmington, Del., who concluded that the initial tear of the labrum in Brand's right shoulder is responsible for a considerable decrease in the range of motion and instability.

The surgery will take place at the Wilmington Surgery Center.

"Elton wanted to do whatever he could to get back on the court and initially elected to forgo surgery in order to help his teammates," team president Ed Stefanski said. "He worked as hard as he could over the past six weeks to return, however the scope of the injury would not allow it."

Thaddeus Young has started at power forward in Brand's absence, and reserves Marreese Speights and Reggie Evans will see their minutes increase. Stefanski believes the Sixers can make the playoffs with a combination of those three and doesn't expect to pursue a trade.

The Sixers made the playoffs last season, but were 23-24 heading into Thursday's game. They already fired coach Maurice Cheeks and replaced him with Tony DiLeo and have lost two straight games in agonizing fashion. Still, Stefanski said the expectations remain the same.

"I think we're a playoff team even without Elton," Stefanski said.

Villegas opens with 63 in bid for odd hat trick

BUICK INVITATIONAL

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Camilo Villegas seems to play his best golf when Tiger Woods isn't around to defend a title.

Villegas holed out for an eagle early in his round and made a string of birdies late for a 9-under 63 on the easier North Course at Torrey Pines, giving him a three-shot lead Thursday in the Buick Invitational as he goes for a bizarre hat trick.

A victory this week would be his third straight at a tournament where Woods was the defending champion.

Villegas won the BMW Championship and Tour Championship last fall to close out the FedEx Cup portion of the season—both won by Woods the previous year—and he got off to a blazing start on a cloudy, chilly day along the Pacific bluffs.

He hit a lob wedge over the bunker and into the hole for eagle on the par-4 second hole to quickly put his name atop the leaderboard, then built his lead with three birdies in a four-hole stretch on the back nine.

Davis Love III, coming up on two pivotal weeks as he tries to get into the Accenture Match Play Championship, and Aaron Baddeley each shot 66 on the North while playing in the same group.

The best score on the South Course, site of the U.S. Open last summer, belonged to Scott Sterling and Matthew Goggin at 69. Given the disparity of these courses, the leaderboard doesn't sort itself out until everyone has played both sides.

Phil Mickelson, a three-time winner of the Buick Invitational, put together a solid round of 70 on the South Course with a few big par saves, including a 15-footer on his final hole.

British Open and PGA champion Padraig Harrington, making his PGA Tour debut, started strong with three birdies on the opening four holes of the North Course, but a four-putt double bogey on the 17th sent him to a 71.

Woods is the four-time defending champion at the Buick Invitational, but still is recovering from season-ending surgery on his left knee—a week after his U.S. Open playoff victory.

"I'm glad he's not here," Villegas said. "He plays pretty good around here, I can tell you that."

Villegas wasn't too shabby on the North Course, which was more than 3 1/2 strokes easier than the South, but still no bargain with blustery, cool conditions, along with greens that were firmer than usual with no water on them in anticipation of rain this weekend.

Coming off a missed cut last week in the FBR Open, Villegas opened with a simple birdie on the par-5 first, then made a mistake with his tee shot on the 326-yard second hole by hitting his drive to the right, 50 yards from the flag with a bunker in the way.

Using a new 63-degree sand wedge, he popped it up over the sand and never saw it go in the hole.

"I had a decent lie," Villegas said. "I just puffed it up in the air, and I knew it was good, but I didn't see the ball go in. My caddie said, 'It went in.' Early in the round, not much of a reaction."

He made some big putts on the back nine, including a 25-foot birdie on the 14th with a big break to the left. That followed a chip that bounced harder than he expected, part of the difficult of playing the firm greens.

It should get tougher Friday.

The average score on the South Course was 75.37, which is why Pat Perez was smiling after a 73. "That's like 69," he said.

Villegas had the right attitude going into his second round.

"The rough is up. It's tough. It was very firm during the pro-am," he said. "If it rains a little, it's going to get softer, the rough is going to get a little more severe. Who knows, man? Just go out there and hit some shots."

Love is at No. 58 in the world ranking, needing to stay inside the top 64 after next week at Pebble Beach to qualify for Match Play, then keep going into the top 50 to get into another World Golf Championship and eventually the Masters.

He was pleased with a 66, for no other reason than it kept him near the top of the leaderboard going to the South Course.

"You've got to get off to a good start no matter what," Love said. "Because three rounds on the South will bring you down."

Mickelson missed the cut at the FBR Open last week in his 2009 debut, but has a good omen on his side. The last two times he missed the cut on the West Coast, he won the following week. Lefty made a collection of good par saves, but got away with a mental mistake at the end of his round.

He decided to hit driver to get to the front of the green, setting up an easy up-and-down for birdie, but he couldn't go right. And he went right, into a face of a bunker. From there, he hit into another bad lie in a greenside bunker, and did well to blast out to 15 feet. But he made the putt, and all was well.

"It wasn't the smartest play there," he said. "I should have hit 3-wood down there and taken 6 out of play. But that's what happens. I was fortunate to walk away with par."

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	41	10	.804	_
Philadelphia	24	24	.500	15 1/2
New Jersey	23	27	.460	17 1/2
New York	21	27	.438	18 1/2
Toronto	19	32	.373	22

Southeast Division

Orlando	37	11	.771	_
Atlanta	28	20	.583	9
Miami	26	22	.542	11
Charlotte	19	29	.396	18
Washington	10	39	.204	27 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	39	9	.813	_
Detroit	26	21	.553	12 1/2
Milwaukee	24	28	.462	17
Chicago	22	28	.440	18
Indiana	19	31	.380	21

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	33	15	.688	_
New Orleans	28	18	.609	4
Houston	30	20	.600	4
Dallas	29	20	.592	4 1/2
Memphis	13	35	.271	20

Northwest Division

Denver	33	16	.673	_
Portland	30	18	.625	2 1/2
Utah	28	22	.560	5 1/2
Minnesota	17	31	.354	15 1/2
Oklahoma City	11	38	.224	22

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	40	9	.816	_
Phoenix	26	21	.553	13
Golden State	16	34	.320	24 1/2
Sacramento	11	39	.220	29 1/2
L.A. Clippers	10	39	.204	30

Yesterday's Games

Philadelphia 99, Indiana 94
L.A. Lakers 110, Boston 109, OT
Utah 115, Dallas 87

BUICK INVITATIONAL SCORES

SAN DIEGO (AP)–Scores Thursday from the Buick Invitational, a $5.3 million U.S. PGA Tour event on two par-72 Torrey Pines courses; 7,628-yard South Course, 6,915-yard North Course:

FIRST ROUND

Camilo Villegas	32-31	63
Davis Love III	32-34	66
Aaron Baddeley	33-33	66
Stuart Appleby	32-36	68
Jeff Overton	33-35	68
Robert Garrigus	34-34	68
Harrison Frazar	33-36	69
Lucas Glover	33-36	69
Nick Watney	35-34	69
Ben Crane	34-35	69
Scott Sterling	33-36	69
Ricky Barnes	34-35	69
Mathew Goggin	35-34	69
Brian Bateman	36-33	69
Jason Day	35-34	69
Briny Baird	35-35	70
John Rollins	34-36	70
Luke Donald	35-35	70
Matt Jones	34-36	70
Jason Dufner	37-33	70
D.A. Points	35-35	70
Jason Gore	35-35	70
Nathan Green	35-35	70
Jonathan Kaye	37-33	70
Kent Jones	36-34	70
J.J. Henry	34-36	70
Ryuji Imada	37-33	70
Phil Mickelson	36-34	70
Bob Heintz	35-35	70
Brian Vranesh	36-34	70
Greg Owen	35-35	70
Gregor Main	35-35	70
Tag Ridings	33-38	71
Brett Quigley	35-36	71
Dean Wilson	34-37	71
Retief Goosen	36-35	71
George McNeill	37-34	71
Kevin Stadler	35-36	71
Aaron Watkins	37-34	71
Jeff Klauk	33-38	71
Anthony Smith	38-33	71
Courtland Lowe	34-37	71
Bob Tway	32-39	71
Jesper Parnevik	35-36	71
Bubba Watson	35-36	71
John Huston	37-34	71
Charley Hoffman	35-36	71
Marc Turnesa	35-36	71
Padraig Harrington	33-38	71
Michael Allen	35-36	71
Jarrod Lyle	33-38	71
Chris Riley	36-36	72
Glen Day	35-37	72
Arjun Atwal	37-35	72
Joe Durant	36-36	72
Paul Goydos	38-34	72
Steve Allan	36-36	72
Bill Haas	37-35	72
Rick Price	34-38	72
Jay Williamson	34-38	72
Rod Pampling	36-36	72
Charles Howell III	37-35	72
Webb Simpson	35-37	72
Gregory Casagranda	36-36	72
Aron Price	38-34	72
Alex Cejka	36-37	73
J.B. Holmes	36-37	73
Arron Oberholser	36-37	73
Pat Perez	37-36	73
Dudley Hart	35-38	73
Chris Stroud	36-37	73
Colt Knost	37-36	73
Peter Tomasulo	36-37	73
James Driscoll	35-38	73
Greg Chalmers	38-35	73
Tim Petrovic	36-37	73
Bart Bryant	36-37	73
Josh Anderson	37-36	73
Patrick Sheehan	36-38	74
Kevin Streelman	35-39	74
Scott McCarron	38-36	74
Ted Purdy	39-35	74
Lee Janzen	38-36	74
Charles Warren	37-37	74
Woody Austin	38-36	74
Dustin Johnson	38-36	74
Fred Couples	38-36	74
Parker McLachlin	36-38	74
John Merrick	34-40	74
Darron Stiles	39-35	74
James Oh	36-38	74
Brendon de Jonge	39-35	74
Kevin Larsen	38-36	74
Bill Lunde	39-35	74
Tyler Aldridge	37-37	74
Troy Matteson	37-37	74
John Mallinger	37-37	74
Hunter Mahan	38-36	74
Todd Hamilton	36-38	74
Matt Bettencourt	37-37	74
Marc Leishman	34-40	74
Spencer Levin	38-36	74
Tom Pernice, Jr.	35-40	75
Notah Begay III	37-38	75
Charlie Wi	38-37	75
Scott Piercy	37-38	75
Leif Olson	36-39	75
Martin Laird	37-38	75
Nicholas Thompson	37-38	75
Tom Lehman	38-37	75
Brandt Snedeker	39-36	75
Brad Adamonis	39-36	75
David Mathis	40-35	75
Rory Sabbatini	38-38	76
Chez Reavie	39-37	76
John Senden	39-37	76
Gary Woodland	37-39	76
David Berganio, Jr.	38-38	76
Marco Dawson	39-37	76
Daniel Chopra	39-37	76
Johnson Wagner	38-38	76
Ben Curtis	38-38	76
Jimmy Walker	38-38	76
Carl Pettersson	40-37	77
Y.E. Yang	39-38	77
Matt Weibring	39-38	77
Kevin Sutherland	38-39	77
Fredrik Jacobson	38-39	77
Casey Wittenberg	38-39	77
Tommy Gainey	41-36	77
Carlos Franco	39-39	78
Rich Beem	41-37	78
Brandt Jobe	40-38	78
Greg Kraft	41-37	78
Scott Gutshewski	38-40	78
Wil Collins	40-38	78
Paul Stankowski	38-40	78
Peter Lonard	39-39	78
Steve Marino	41-37	78
Corey Pavin	39-39	78
Cliff Kresge	37-41	78
Dennis Paulson	38-40	78
Troy Kelly	38-40	78
Frank Lickliter II	42-37	79
Ryan Moore	41-38	79
Tim Parun	35-44	79
Bryce Molder	40-39	79
Kris Blanks	40-39	79
Brad Faxon	40-39	79
James Nitties	38-41	79
Jeff Quinney	39-41	80
Wes Short, Jr.	39-42	81
Brendon Todd	42-39	81
Billy Andrade	40-42	82
Matthew Borchert	38-44	82
Eric Axley	42-43	85

By The Associated Press

NMITF holds first Enticer tomorrow

The first of a series of Enticer races will be held tomorrow, Feb. 8, the organizing Northern Mariana Islands Triathlon Federation announced yesterday.

The course (swim, bike, run) will start and finish at Paupau Beach in Tanapag.

Registration time will begin at 6:30am, while the participants will be off for the swim at 7am, a distance of roughly 500 meters.

Organizers said they would allow participants to use their snorkels and fins.

The bike will be about six miles from Paupau Beach to Banzai Cliff Memorial Park and back, while the run will cover less than two miles from Paupau Beach to Marianas Resort and Spa and back.

Registration fee will be $5 for NMITF members, while non-members will pay $10. Anyone interested to become new members of NMITF will be charged $35, including the race.

NMITF's Lewie Tenorio said Enticer races are short distance triathlons organized by the NMITF to get all triathletes, first-timers, and veterans ready for upcoming big races.

Sunday's event will be the first of a series of Enticer races leading up to XTERRA and Tagaman sometime in April.

Tenorio said that most triathlon clubs organize Enticers as a way for beginners to become involved in triathlon.

Such events are purposely held with shorter distances and the fun of it so as to draw more participants and so that just about anyone can do them.

"We encourage anyone who has ever thought of doing XTERRA or Tagaman to come out and join us and hopefully this will be their first step toward reaching that goal," Tenorio said.

He recalled that not too long ago he was also a rookie triathlete and thanked NMITF Enticer races for his initiation to the sport.

"I was able to gradually build toward the longer triathlons," he said.

Tenorio said the second Enticer race will be held later this month or early next month. ***(Nazario Rodriguez Jr.)***

SEE-SAWING

From Page 28

part of—I've never been so emotionally drained in my life," said the Steelers' Harrison afterward, blinking his eyes above his sweat-drenched jersey. "I am just so tired right now, man, I could go to sleep right here."

For the previous four hours, the game of football has never been more awake, the favored Steelers fighting to gain a record sixth world title, the Cardinals fighting to shed the label as the most hapless franchise in the sport, the fight devolving into part street, part sublime.

"So much on the line for both teams, everybody was trying to put their foot down, trying to show that there weren't going to be any punks out there," said the Cardinals' Darnell Dockett.

No punks, but plenty of fireworks and ferocity and eventually a fantastic ending that showed just 35 seconds remaining when Holmes caught the six-yard touchdown pass from Ben Roethlisberger to give the Steelers the victory.

Holmes celebrated by sitting alone on the ground, clutching the ball with his head buried in his arms.

"I thought, 'I did it, I just caught the ball that won the Super Bowl,'" he said.

Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie, one of the three Cardinal defenders beaten on the play, mourned by wandering to the sideline in a daze.

"All your dreams, all you worked for, shattered in one moment," he said.

It was a game of collectively indelible moments, beginning with Oscar winner Jennifer Hudson, who used her first public appearance since the October murders of three family members to belt out a national anthem for the ages.

There is no cheering in the press box but, yeah, well, after Hudson finished a final note that shot through the air like a knockout jab, we all cheered.

The night was later held together with a halftime show featuring ageless legend Bruce Springsteen, who bossed around 70,000 light-waving fans bossing around a halftime show with such songs as "Born to Run," "Glory Days" and "Working on a Dream."

Those would eventually be not only titles, but game descriptions.

Born to Run?

That's what Harrison became at the end of the first half when, with Arizona driving for a go-ahead touchdown, he stepped in front of a Kurt Warner pass and ran 100 yards for a touchdown to give the Steelers an instant 17-7 halftime lead.

It was not only the longest scoring play in Super Bowl history, it was one of the most entertaining, with the 245-pound linebacker rumbling around and through six potential tacklers and countless leveling blocks.

Said Harrison: "I didn't think I was going to make it, but our guys kept throwing their bodies all over the field, knocking them out of the way."

Said the Cardinals' Wells: "I was chasing, but it was like they had a convoy going."

The Steelers increased the lead to 20-7 in the third quarter and, considering no team has ever overcome a deficit of greater than 10 points to win the Super Bowl, it seemed like the Cardinals were finished.

Then, in a fourth quarter that typified his comeback career, Warner made sure they weren't.

Chasing a dream?

Warner led the Cardinals the length of the field for a touchdown in about three blinks, the Arizona defense held, and then Warner hit Fitzgerald across the middle for the 64-yard touchdown pass with 2:47 remaining to give Arizona a three-point lead.

Said Harrison: "One second you are on cloud nine, and the next second you feel like a piece of garbage."

Countered Warner: "Your emotions are so high ... you know that you are two minutes away from being world champions"

But those two minutes, it turns out, belonged to the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Glory days?

Roethlisberger, already trying to win his second championship at age 26, calmly led the Steelers back down the field from his 12-yard line, completing four of five passes.

Three of those passes were to Holmes, including a 40-yarder across the middle that gave the Steelers the ball on the 6-yard line.

Then Holmes let a sure touchdown pass zip past his hands, after which he immediately begged his quarterback for one more chance.

"I grabbed him outside the huddle, I said, 'Please, let me get you this game, I can get you this game,'" said Holmes.

Second later, on the same play on the other side of the end zone, he did, with a stretching catch that ended with his feet brushing the grass.

Later, his children in his arm, wonder in his eyes, the newly crowned Super Bowl MVP of the greatest Super Bowl ever shook his head.

"My feet never left the ground," Holmes claimed.

He was the only one.

JANECE

From Page 28

Janece played third base for the Warriors and helped the team to a 6-0 record en route to winning the 2008 district title.

"As a school team, they would also play many weekend tournaments and often they will advance to championship games and win. With her strength, speed and good eye for the ball, in one game, she completed a cycle with an inside the park homer," Samantha said.

The elder Salas said Janece started to get involved in baseball when her daughter was only nine years old.

The younger Salas played Little League baseball for two years starting in 2002 when their family moved to Kentucky.

"Then we relocated to Arizona where the sport of softball—mountain pitch and underhand fast-pitch—was introduced to her at the school she attended. She played for two years and excelled in the sport," Samantha said.

Samantha said Janece looks up to Jennie Lynn Finch, who pitched for the USA softball team that won the gold medal at the 2004 Summer Olympics. In college, Finch played for the University of Arizona Wildcats.

When Janece and her family returned to Saipan in 2006, her experience in playing in various softball tournaments in Arizona helped her become one of the top players of GTC.

Now that she is back in Arizona, Janece, who is also a motocross competitor having rode for Team Erricco in MRA races, hopes to learn more about fastpitch softball.

"Janece has recently been invited to participate in the AGS fastpitch clinic for Team Chaos in Arizona.

The Chaos is a four-time All ACC tournament team and are coached and trained by former Florida State starting catcher Kristi Terry.

Samantha said Janece will begin attending the clinic on Feb. 14.

GECKOS

From Page 28

The Geckos, who finished third last year, also won against Saipan Community School last Jan. 22 (54-3), Seventh Day Adventist last Jan. 27 (55-2), Mt. Carmel School last Jan. 29 (45-25), and Grace Christian Academy last Feb. 3 (55-34).

GCA 22, SDA 7 (Girls)

Host GCA repeated over SDA, 22-7, in the girls division following its 33-7 win during their first meeting last Jan. 30.

With the victory, the Lady Eagles maintained a perfect 6-0 record.

Kallie O'Connor led all scorers with six points for the Lady Eagles. Three of her teammates added four points each, including Crystalline Cristobal, Chezka De Luna, and Angela Velasco. Julie Muna and Jimaela Ham contributed two points each.

Jacinta Richards added three points, while Erin Belle Mendiola and Danessa Taylor had two each for SDA, which remained winless after six straight games.

GCA 48, SDA 9 (Boys)

In the boys division, the GCA Eagles nailed its third win in five games over SDA, 48-9.

The undermanned SDA, which played the entire game with only five players, has yet to post a win this year after losing all its first round assignments.

On the other hand, 10 players who were sent on the court scored for the Eagles, including Ken Arejola (10 points), Genesis Manglona (8), Kim Alvarado (6), Peter Camacho (6), and Joseph Sablan (6).

Patrick Reyes added four, while four others came up with two points each. They were Tim De la Rosa, Khmmer Sugue, Mark Salvador, and Brandon Lorenz.

Scorers for SDA were Jong Woo Kim (4), Tyler Palacios (2), and Vincent Iba (2).

Boys

SIS 41 – R. Jones 12, Camacho 12, Smith 4, Chung 2, Barry 2, Song 2, Knecht 0, Mailman 0, A. Jones 0, Kushihata 0.

CCA 16 – Jin 6, Ji 4, Yue 2, Lee 2, Alamer 2, Perez 0, Valeros 0, Fidelino 0.

Scoring by quarters: 15-4, 29-6, 36-10, 41-16.

GCA 48 – Orejola 10, Manglona 8, Alvarado 6, Camacho 6, Sablan 6, Reyes 4, Dela Rosa 2, Sugue 2, Salavador 2, Lorenz 2.

SDA 9 – Kim 4, Palacios 3, Iba 2, Sablan 0, Nish 0.

Quarterscores: 12-1, 28-1, 44-3, 48-9

Girls

GCA 22 – O'Connor 6, Cristobal 4, De Luna 4, Velasco 4, Muna 2, Ham 2.

SDA 7 – Richards 3, Mendiola 2, D. Taylor 2, Kim 0, Jin 0, S. Taylor 0.

Quarterscores: 6-0, 12-2, 14-5, 22-7.

USA Swimming suspends Phelps for 3 months

Michael Phelps' day grew lousier by the hour on Thursday. First he lost a major sponsor, then he got suspended.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Lakers snap another Boston streak

Lamar Odom made a pair of free throws with 16 seconds left in overtime to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to a 110-109 victory over Boston on Thursday night and snap the Celtics' 12-game winning streak.

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Janece making waves in desert

Janece Salas at bat for the Apache Warriors during their title game against Frontier last month in Peroia, Arizona.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Janece Mae Crisostomo Salas had found the opportunities she has long been looking for to excel in fast-pitch softball and is making the most of them.

Janece, daughter of Samantha and J.J. Salas of Saipan, is now based in Peroia, Arizona, and is suiting up for the Apache Warriors.

The 13-year-old Janece left Saipan in the summer of 2008 to study at Apache Elementary School.

Before leaving Saipan, Janece played for the Shell Suns in the Saipan Little League Baseball going up against boys Little Leaguers. The CNMI does not have an all-female Little League and girls wanting to play are squeezed into a boys-dominated SLLB teams.

The Commonwealth has a fast-pitch event for girls, but the league, which is led by Public School System, usually lasts for only two months and plays only twice a week.

Janece played for Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School in the PSS league before moving to Apache.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Janece Salas poses with family members and friends after the Apache Warriors game in Peoria, Arizona.

"We decided that for her education and for her to pursue the sport she loved so much, she and her sister Julia had to go back to Arizona and live with their grandparents (Francisco and Julita Crisostimo)," Samantha said.

In Arizona, the seventh grader

See JANECE on Page 27

Geckos sweep first round, Eagles soar

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Saipan International School swept its first round assignment after beating host Calvary Christian Academy, 41-16, yesterday in the ongoing 2009 Coalition of Private Schools Sports Association basketball league.

The win gave the Geckos a 5-0 record in the boys division, while the loss was CCA's fourth in five games.

Rafael Jones and Chris Camacho finished with 12 points each to lead the Geckos, who posted their biggest lead of 26 points at the end of third quarter, 36-10, for yet another lopsided win.

Harrison Smith scored four points, while four other Geckos added two points each, including Alex Chung, Bo Barry, Crosby Shultz, and Bill Song.

Jin Han Yoon led CCA with six, Ji Hoon Choi shot four, while Zion Alamer, Albert Lee, and Yue Jin Kim added two points each.

"We will just play our game one at a time. We're working hard to win each game," Geckos coach Rick Limkenhelt said after the match.

See GECKOS on Page 27

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.

Angelo Jones of Saipan International School attempts a layup against Calvary Christian Academy defenders Jin Han Yoon and Jun Fidelino during their game Thursday in the 2009 COPSSA basketball league. The Geckos won, 41-16.

By BILL PLASCHKE
(c) 2009, Los Angeles Times

See-sawing is believing in XLIII as the best

It was Pittsburgh ... no, it was Arizona ... no, it was Pittsburgh ... no, it was both of them, clutching each other in a dance of breathless, wonderful chaos.

It was the Steelers giant James Harrison rumbling 100 yards with an interception for the longest scoring play in Super Bowl history, then collapsing in the end zone in exhaustion.

No, it was the Cardinals' shaggy Larry Fitzgerald streaking 64 yards with a touchdown catch that could have made more history, sticking his hand into a quiet sky in stunned disbelief.

No, it was the Steelers' speedy Santonio Holmes stretched into that same sky a few minutes later, three defenders around him, one football in front him, the ball finding his hands, his toes finding the grass, sudden victory wrapping him in its dizzying embrace.

In the end Sunday night, with Pittsburgh dancing and Arizona moaning and America struck dumb with the true spectacle of it all, Super Bowl XLIII will overwhelmingly be remembered for one thing.

It was the greatest.

From a stirring national anthem to a tingling late finish, the Steelers' 27-23 victory over the Cardinals was the greatest Super Bowl ever, one whose roman numbers should have been XXL for its double-extra-large helping of theatrics and dramatics.

It was enough to even knock a world champion cold.

"It is definitely the most emotional game I have ever been

See SEE-SAWING on Page 27